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THE ORDINARY WAYS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

A TREATISE ON ASCETIC THEOLOGY

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A TREATISE ON ASCETIC THEOLOGY

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF S. TERESA DECLARED BY THE CARMELITE CONGRESS OF MADRID (MARCH, 1923)

FOR THE USE OF SEMINARIES, THE CLERGY & LAYFOLK

Estote perfecti sicut Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est (MATT. v, 48).

Translated from "Les Voies Ordinaires de la Vie Spirituelle"

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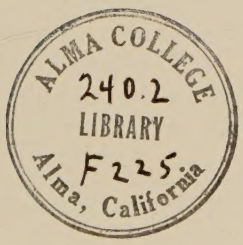

LONDON
BURNS OATES & WASHBOURNE LIMITED
PUBLISHERS TO THE HOLY SEE
1927

First printed in 1927.

NIHIL OBSTAT

GEORGIUS D. SMITH, S.T.D.
Censor deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR:

EDM: CAN: SURMONT
Vicarius generalis.

Westmonasterii,
Die 17a Februarii, 1927.

PRINTED IN ENGLAND.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

FOUR years ago, when I gave the public my study on *Mystical Theology*, I told my readers that, should God yet grant me life and strength, that book would be followed by a study on *Ascetical Theology*. The highly favourable reception granted to the former work[1] encourages me, without too long delay, to keep my promise by the publication of the second work—the subject of which I had already been teaching for seven years (1899-1905) at the Faculty of Theology of the Université de l'Ouest until the issue of the tyrannical decrees of Combes.

Certainly the logical order of these two publications was thereby inverted, since Mysticism is the completion of Asceticism.

But, in the first place, advancing age warned me to hasten with the utmost possible speed. For, whereas there are guides in abundance to direct souls along the ordinary ways of the spiritual life, those guides are much fewer for the mystical ways, especially at the present time of doctrinal crisis when the traditional teaching of mystical theologians is being vigorously attacked and questioned. I longed to take part in the discussions, and to remove from them serious confusions, particularly that of confusing passive or infused contemplation with active or acquired contemplation; for *infused contemplation*, the main theme of the quarrel, has become an ambiguous term, taken in very different senses by the two rival schools. Many misunderstandings have arisen, and it has become necessary to reassert the fundamental distinction between the *two ways*.

I also hoped, in view of our remarkable progress in psycho-physiological knowledge—which Christian apologists can no longer ignore—to throw some light on certain mysterious mystical phenomena and their strange counterfeits. The addition of some new knowledge to the relatively young science of Mysticism did not seem to me impossible, whereas a like claim would be extremely daring with regard to Christian Asceticism, for during past centuries everything

[1] *Mystical Phenomena* (Eng. trans.), Burns Oates and Washbourne, London, 1926.

—or well nigh everything—has been said, and said so well. Such a fear made me hesitate. . . . But I made up my mind to complete my former work, and to supply for Seminaries a clear methodical course of Asceticism, according to the *desiderata* so often expressed by their superiors, and the formal wish of our new Canon Law (Can. 1367, § 5)—and I pursue to the very end the undertaking already begun.

After more than fifty years of priestly life consecrated to the formation of the young priests whom divine Providence had entrusted to me, and to the service of the clergy in several French dioceses—an honour, a joy, and a consolation for which I cannot sufficiently thank our divine Master—I shall die happy if this, my last labour, can be of service to their souls.

It is not to the clergy alone that these words are addressed ; but, at the same time, to that host of elect souls—more and more numerous every day—who, living in the world, have realised its vanity, and who are seeking their way on a higher plane, to an ideal of the spiritual life and Christian perfection, which they instinctively conjecture without knowing it as thoroughly as they would wish. It is to them also that our divine Lord has said, as he said to the Samaritan : *Si scires donum Dei* (Jo. iv, 10), " If thou didst know the gift of God! "

If only I might make the gift of this higher and heavenly life even better known to them, that they may the better love it!

Paris, December 21, 1924, *in the* 52*nd year of my ordination to the priesthood.*

". . . . I have good cause for saying this, for, as I told you, it is important to understand that His Majesty does not lead all souls in the same way. . . . Thus, it does not follow, because all the nuns in this convent practise prayer, that they must all be contemplatives: *this is clearly impossible.* Such an idea would greatly discourage those who do not understand the truth, that contemplation is a gift of God. . . . She who is without it, yet who follows the counsels I have given, will attain great perfection. It may be that she will gain far more merit, as she has to work harder on her own account. . . In one way such souls are safer . . . there is no cause for fear, nor need you doubt that you may become as perfect as the greatest contemplatives. . . . S Martha was holy, though we are never told that she was a contemplative. . . . If she had always been enraptured like the Magdalen, there would have been no one to offer food to this divine Guest. . . Let not the nun who is called to the active life murmur at others who are absorbed in contemplation. . . . Remember that some one must cook the food, and think yourself favoured in being allowed to serve with Martha. . . . Leave that to the Master of the house: He is wise and powerful and knows what is best for you and for Himself. . . . What a gain is ours, if, for fear of losing by it, we do not seek to gain by what we think is best!"

"The best sign that any one has made progress is that she thinks herself the last of all. . . . This is the true test—not sweetness (*spiritual tastes*) in prayer (*of quiet*), ecstasies, visions, and other divine favours of the same kind. The value of these latter we cannot estimate rightly until the next life, but the former are current coin, a constant revenue and a perpetual inheritance. . . . I speak of great humility . . . which will not disobey one tittle of the orders given by the Prioress, but submits to them as to the commands of God, of whom she is the representative. . . . Why run into danger in serving our Lord, when there are so many secure ways of doing so? Who wants you to incur

such risk ? There is need for much insistence on this point. . . . . I am glad to have given this advice to other persons : it will also animate those called to the contemplative life to the practice of humility."

(*The Way of Perfection*, S Teresa, Translated from the Autograph of S Teresa by the Benedictines of Stanbrook. Extract from Chapters xvii and xviii.)

". . . With the help of divine grace *true union* can always be attained, by forcing ourselves to renounce our own will, and by following the will of God in all things. Oh, how many of us affirm that we do this, and believe we seek nothing else—indeed we would die for the truth of what we say. If this be the case, I can only declare, as I fancy I did before, and shall again and again, that we have already obtained this grace from God. There is, then, no need to wish for that other delightful (*mystical or passive*) union described above, for its chief value lies in the resignation of our will to that of God, without which it could not be reached. Oh, how desirable is this union. . . . Is it necessary, in order to attain to this kind of divine union, for the powers of the soul to be suspended (*as in the mystical union*) ? No ; God has many ways of enriching the soul and bringing it to these mansions besides what might be called a short cut. . . . But, be sure of this, my daughters, in any case the silk-worm (*amour-propre*) must die, and it will cost you more in this way. In the former manner this death is facilitated by finding ourselves introduced into a new life ; here, on the contrary, we must give ourselves the death-blow (*by a slow death*). I own that the work will be much harder, but then it will be of a higher value, so that your reward will be greater if you come forth victorious ; . . . *this is the union* (*non-mystical*) *I have longed for all my life, and that I beg our Lord to grant me* ; it is the most certain and the safest. But, alas, how few of us ever obtain it . . . may His Majesty give us the grace to merit union with Him ; it is in our power to gain it if we will."

(*The Interior Castle*, Fifth Mansions, by S Teresa. Translated from the Autograph of S Teresa by the Benedictines of Stanbrook.)

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF THE DUALITY OF THE ACTIVE AND THE PASSIVE WAYS

—ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL—

declared unanimously by the Teresian Congress at Madrid, March, 1923.

" In the *Mansions* of our Holy Mother two *entirely* distinct orders of phenomena are to be found : the one, wherein the soul acts of its own accord with the help of grace ; the other, wherein the soul is supernaturally moved by God. The former, the soul must acquire at whatever cost ; the latter, the soul can only obtain indirectly by the practice of virtues, especially that of humility." (Section i, Theme vii, 5.)

THE ORDINARY WAYS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

I.—DOCTRINAL INTRODUCTION

THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO PERFECTION.—It is an elementary and a fundamental truth of the Christian religion, that everyone is called to perfection or to sanctity—using the word sanctity in a broad sense, to include, besides that heroic virtue which works miracles and merits canonisation, the ordinary perfection proper to the state of each individual.

In Holy Baptism we received, together with sanctifying grace, the germ of Christian life. Now every germ is intended to expand to its utmost and to acquire all that pertains to the integrity of its nature, and even to its perfection—at least, in the degree to which God destines it. This is why, in his Epistles, S Paul always calls the faithful at Corinth and elsewhere : *" Sancti, vocati sancti "* ; they are all saints in germ and by vocation.

To be a *saint*, every individual who by baptism has become a child of God, needs only a little goodwill, with the help of that grace from above which will never fail him. But to be a *great man*, a man of genius, an artist, a philosopher—goodwill is by no means sufficient. Not only are there needed certain special natural abilities, developed by study, but also a favourable environment, the concurrence of external circumstances and events, making possible the appearance and the success of these privileged men.

It is true that great saints have sometimes been at the same time great men : they have won the admiration of their fellow-men both by their sanctity and by their genius. And it is the confusion of these two rôles and of these two kinds of greatness, that causes so many men to say that nothing is more difficult than sanctity, and even that sanctity is not obtainable by all. Now, herein lies a mistake, unless

it be a poor excuse, a secret justification, as it were, for our weakness and cowardice.

But by the side of these saintly men, whom, we admit, we are not all able to imitate, how many less-known saints are there, in every profession and even in the lowliest callings! The Church has canonised not only great popes, great kings, great bishops and great monks, but also ploughmen and shopkeepers, lawyers and doctors, servants and beggars, to say nothing of fishermen and boatmen like the first Apostles. Nothing is more democratic than Christian sanctity ; it is within the reach of all men of good will : *Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.* Already each one of our readers will have seen in part how useful and how attractive is the science which we propose to study with him ; it is known as the *Science of the Saints* in the ordinary ways, or Ascetical Theology.

General Notion of Ascetical Theology.—Taken in its broadest meaning Ascetical Theology is that part of theology which deals with the ordinary ways of the *perfect Christian life.*

" Man lives not by bread alone," nor by a natural life, but also and chiefly by a higher life that is supernatural, a participation in the spiritual life of God himself, which moulds us by degrees to his image and likeness, after having raised us to the state of being children of God and heirs of celestial glory.

Because this supernatural life, lost by the sin of the first man, has been won back for us by the merits and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and has been poured into our souls by the sanctifying grace of Baptism, we call it the *Christian life.* And since every kind of life, if it is to attain to its complete perfection, needs to be developed, there must be also a science that can enlighten us and direct us in the gradual attainment of Christian perfection.

Such is the science known as *ascetical,* from the Greek word ἄσκησις (*exercise, effort*), and also, sometimes, termed by literary men *mystical,* in the broadest sense of this term, for it is mysterious, μύστης, and quite hidden in the interior of souls, in the secret of these sanctuaries of God.

Its Place in Theology.—Asceticism, as we regard it, is one part of the Christian moral code, which itself is a

complement of dogma having its individual place in theology. Theology, broadly speaking, is the science of God and of the things revealed by God, studied in the combined lights of reason and faith, i.e. the revelations of God throughout the ages. It is speculative or practical, according as it teaches us what we must *believe* or what we must *do* to attain to our last end, salvation. Hence arises the important division of this science into dogmatic theology and moral theology. Ordinary morality aims only at teaching us what is good or bad, allowed or forbidden by natural or positive law, and has no further immediate end in view beyond avoiding sin and gaining eternal salvation. When soaring higher, from precept to counsel, it discloses to men's souls the ideal paths of Christian beauty and perfection, we call it the science of the *spiritual* or the *interior life*, the *science of the Saints*, or *Asceticism* and *Mysticism;* these last two words have quickly assumed definite and even somewhat contrary meanings corresponding to quite distinct experimental data.

The Division of Theology into Ascetical and Mystical.—The first undeniable fact with which the *a priori* speculations of certain theologians have come into conflict, is the fact that the same end, Christian perfection or sanctity, is reached along a *twofold way*—the *active* and the *passive way*. The paths of the active or common way are long and toilsome ; those of the passive way, under the complete influence of the Holy Spirit, are shorter and more easy. The former are within the reach of every soul of good will helped by divine grace ; the latter are entirely gratuitous and privileged, and their essential feature is that no single soul—not even the holiest—can of its own accord enter upon them ; *no se puede adquirir*, as S Teresa affirms.

Now this fundamental fact of the distinction and contrast between the *two ways, active and passive*, was not only recognised from the very first ages of Christian antiquity by all the great mystics (as we have proved elsewhere), but also has been recently proclaimed by the Carmelite Congress at Madrid (1923), which made it the corner-stone of the distinction between Asceticism and Mysticism. Let us quote the actual words : " In the Mansions of the *Interior Castle* of our Mother S Teresa, there are to be found two orders of phenomena utterly distinct, *completamente*

distintos: on the one hand, those wherein the soul acts spontaneously with the help of divine grace; on the other hand, those wherein the soul is supernaturally impelled by God. As for the first kind, the soul must *exert itself to obtain them* at whatever cost, *a todo trance*; the other kind it can only obtain indirectly by the practice of the virtues, particularly humility. . . . They are the gift of God, and it is only as such that they can be acquired by a soul, purely through the mercy of God, *misericordiosamente.*" (Theme vii. 5; v. Concl. 1.)

In this teaching, the Carmelite Congress has made itself heard as the echo of S Teresa's own words, for there is perhaps no other fundamental truth on which that Saint more often insisted. Numerous quotations upon this subject will be found in the present writer's *Mystical Phenomena.* In order to satisfy the mind of the reader, the following now classic quotation will suffice: " In these two kinds of prayer (active or acquired)," writes the Saint, " we can do something by ourselves upheld by divine grace. On the contrary, in that contemplation (passive) of which I have just spoken, we can do absolutely nothing. *It is God who does everything* beyond our reach; it is solely and entirely his work" (*Way*, ch. xxv.). " In this work, our share of cooperation is nought. . . . In this matter the soul plays the same part as does the wax on which a seal is imprinted. . . . O divine Goodness! Even here thou furnishest all things; thou askest one thing alone . . . that the wax offer no resistance. . . ." (*Inter. Cast.*, 5th Mansion, ch. ii). The same doctrine is to be found in her disciple, S John of the Cross: " The soul receives all the spiritual advantages (the touch of the understanding and that of the heart) without producing from its own depths any acts other than its concurrence" (*Living Flame*, verse 3, Cant. 3, § 5).

Although *entirely passive* and in no way meritorious *in itself*, since it is not within our power, this divine touch does not fail to be very sanctifying, whether by the loving acquiescence of the will which accompanies it, or by the vital, free and meritorious, and the more generous and holy reactions which it at once provokes.

Now, as soon as there appears in an interior life this new element, *entirely passive*, and the consciousness of it which we experience—to wit, *the divine touch on mind and heart*—our spiritual life undergoes a transformation which S Teresa compares with the metamorphosis of a caterpillar

into a white butterfly: and we enter a new world which deserves to be studied apart, which in fact demands such study by the novelty and the abundance of the material which it offers. From this point, the study both of these passive or mystical phenomena, and of their human and natural analogies (or their diabolical imitation which we must needs know how to distinguish), will be the subject of a science apart —Mystical Theology. We say *apart*, but not separated or independent; for, just as moral theology is nourished by the sap of dogmatic theology, and ascetical theology by the sap of both, without being separated from them, so will mystical theology be nourished by the three, whilst retaining its own position. In the same way, it is the trunk which gives life to the branch, and the branch to its boughs, whilst retaining its own substance and life. Sciences which, while possessing their own principles and conclusions, are based on those of another science, are said by logicians to be the *subordinate* sciences of the latter. Now the sciences of Christian perfection, Asceticism and Mysticism, are both subordinate to Moral Theology, and distinguished from each other; Asceticism has reference to the *human actions*, helped by grace, towards perfection; and Mysticism deals with the divine *actions* in a soul itself utterly passive, towards this same end of Christian perfection. The science of Theology, clearly, remains unique; but, like a huge tree, it has innumerable boughs springing one from another, and each bough can be studied separately, without ever forgetting its relation to the whole.

Different Methods.—Asceticism and Mysticism can never have the same methods of discovery and progress. Mysticism is rather an experimental science, Asceticism rather an *a priori* science constructed by reasoning upon the data of revelation and pure reason. Like Physics or Astronomy, Mysticism must conform to facts duly observed, and it must regard as false all that contradicts observed data. On the contrary, Asceticism, like Ethics, far from being fashioned from facts and customs, must often contradict them in the name of *law*, and give us maxims that appear to contradict alike facts and popular testimony; as, for example, the following: Blessed are the poor! Obviously, this difference of method already arises from the very notions given above of Asceticism and Mysticism.

Who, then, with only the light of reason and of faith, would ever have been able even to suspect that there might be some states of the interior life that are *entirely passive*, in which " it is God who does everything," with nothing beyond acquiescence on our part, as has been experienced and described by S Teresa, S John of the Cross, and all the great mystics? Certainly, no theological reasoning could have proved it, nor even have made it possible to be foreseen, and for our own conviction the countless and authentic experiences of the Saints have been necessary. Left solely to his powers of argument, the theologian —a friend of *a priori* arguments—would rather have concluded that such utterly passive states are incapable of producing sanctity and therefore " impossible." But what seems to man's eyes impossible is not always so in the eyes of God, whose wondrous secrets so often baffle the childish calculations of our most learned men.

The facts of reason and faith would not have sufficed to make us distinguish, for example, *acquired* from *infused* contemplation, nor to make us discover and analyse the multiple forms of these passive states—such as quiet, union with suspended powers, ecstasy with suppressed sensibility, perfect union, etc.—so minutely described and classified by the intimate experiences of S Teresa and other great mystics. They are the fundamental basis of Mystical Theology ; accordingly, as Gerson has declared : " This is no abstract science, but an experimental one."

On the contrary, Ascetical Theology, being founded on the facts of reason and faith, depends especially upon reasoning. For example, to discover the nature of Christian perfection and the general means of attaining to it and of progressing in all the virtues by prayer and the sacraments, joined to the individual effort that does violence to Heaven —*violenti rapiunt illud*—it is sufficient to penetrate the meaning of Holy Scripture, and to draw thence, under the direction of the Church's magisterium, every conclusion logically contained in the revealed principles.

Of course, the individual application of these general principles and conclusions will require some experimental knowledge of souls—for example, of the diversity of character, temperament, abilities or passions favourable or unfavourable to the practice of the Christian life. But this is no longer the theoretical science of perfection ; it is an art that grafts

itself upon that science, the art of direction, which of all arts is the most delicate and the most difficult : *ars artium, regimen animarum.* The fact remains established, that Ascetical Theology is a science mainly speculative, theoretical or abstract. Psychological experience has only a minor part, and often an indirect one, in focussing its principles and conclusions.

Different Principles.—If the methods of Asceticism and of Mysticism are so different, the general principles by which they conduct or direct souls are no less so. The Carmelite Congress, in its seventh conclusion, quoted above, lays this down formally for us. " In the active ways," we were told, " the soul must *strive to the utmost* to attain the end " ; it must, therefore, co-operate positively and generously with the *grace* which is offered to it. On the contrary, in the passive ways, where divine grace seeks to *operate alone,* we must be guided by the principle of *laisser faire* with respect to God ; we can co-operate only indirectly, by " not offering any resistance," as S Teresa says, and by our generosity in removing any obstacle which could hinder God's action within us.

Hence may be seen how harmful, and perhaps how deadly, might be for souls the confusion of the two ways, active and passive, and of the two general principles governing them : for instance, if the principle of *laisser faire* towards God were applied to the active ways, confusion would arise, due to its provoking spiritual sloth and a false abandonment to God's grace, and consequently weakening and even breaking the mainspring of a soul's perfection, namely generosity in sacrifice and love for virtues that crucify ; or, conversely, if the principle of " striving to the utmost " were to be introduced into the passive ways wherein striving is of no value, since every passive state that is in truth divine is beyond the reach of all our striving, *no se puede adquirir.* The most harmful, and perhaps mortal, illusions would undoubtedly result from such fantastic efforts, as has been shown only too clearly by the havoc wrought in souls by the errors of quietism and semi-quietism. By a strange antithesis, the masters of these errors had combined the two abuses that have been described above ; they advocated an effort to obtain by conquest a superhuman state, in which we should no longer have

any duty save that of leaving all action to God : i.e. *effort* in order to have *no further exertion to make.* If this error has disappeared beneath the blows of the Church's repeated anathemas, only too long has its tendency survived in all the experiments in " short cuts " or " simplified interior life," wherein reigns confusion between ways active and passive, between Asceticism and Mysticism. We shall return to this subject elsewhere.

The Bond Between Asceticism and Mysticism.—After having thus distinguished Asceticism from Mysticism, we shall refrain from any consideration of the bond between them, because it has given rise to controversies that we can and even ought to postpone, not yet having studied the elements involved in the question. Everyone is agreed that the active or ascetical ways are the usual preparation for the passive or mystical ways, *if God calls us to these latter.* But is every soul thus called, in such a way that if it does not succeed it has only itself and its opposition to divine grace to blame ? This is a question which is at present under lively discussion, and one which the abuse of *a priori* methods has strangely confused. Perhaps the method of observation would have sufficed to prove that instances of passive or infused contemplation, even in chosen souls, are so rare that we may conclude against a universal invitation to all men ; there is no normal connection between the two kinds of way. We refer this question to our treatise on Mysticism.

The Excellence of Ascetical Theology.—From the preceding ideas there clearly follows a conclusion as to the excellent worth of Ascetical Theology. Since this science treats of the perfect Christian life, and since this life is nought else than participation in the spiritual life of God himself, can any subject be imagined nobler in itself, more fascinating as its secrets are studied, and more important for man's higher life ?

What is nobler than the study of God, and of the human soul, created to the image of God and reinstated by the Redemption in most intimate relations with God—relations that had been lost by the Fall ? It is impossible to conceive any loftier theme for our study than God and the soul.

God, the Blessed Trinity, living and dwelling in us, to

" make his delight to be with the children of men," to transform them into the adopted children of God, sharing his spiritual life and freed from the senses and from matter, whilst awaiting the time when they shall be ripe for the Beatific Vision which is to complete their union and likeness with God : *tunc similes ei erimus.*

The soul, by degrees freeing itself from matter and carnal desires, generously cultivating the crucifying virtues of our own divine Model, the Incarnate Word, visible Image of the invisible God ; and allowing itself to be led by the action of God's divine Spirit, through mystical ascents, to the summit of that perfect life which has been given as a goal to our efforts and to the mysterious collaboration of his grace—again we ask, what nobler study than this ? Is it not also the most necessary for us ?

The Priest Needs Ascetical Theology.—A priest needs to sanctify himself in order to sanctify souls : " *pro eis sanctifico meipsum* " (Jo. xvii, 19) : a twofold duty which he will never fulfil unless he knows and studies the science of the Saints. Of the priestly obligation to sanctity, we shall speak in its proper place. Let it suffice to say that its need is to-day more than ever imperative. Living as we are no longer in an age of faith but rather in an age of rationalism and of naturalism, and therefore living in an atmosphere of sensualism and dissipation that penetrates our every pore—we need not merely to study superficially this supernatural science as an antidote, but to study it profoundly with daily meditation upon it, assisted by the examples of the Saints' lives ; we need a science that has been lived, because when it has been lived it is better understood, and in the measure by which we shall have become holy, we shall be the means of radiating holiness and of communicating it to the souls of men, by our words, counsels, and good example.

But in the grave responsibility of directing souls there is no less urgent a reason for devoting ourselves entirely to this study. Even in the case of sinners needing to be converted, we must know the rules and principles of Asceticism in order to teach them how to combat their passions, how to deaden them gradually by contrary habits, how to resist temptations, and how to ward them

off by prayer, by watchfulness, and by practising the spiritual exercises adapted to their needs.

To urge a yet stronger argument, if we have to deal with chosen souls that already are occupied in the ways of perfection, or that aspire to abandon tepidity and become more perfect, it will indeed be necessary for their director to know how to initiate them in these perfect ways, how to conduct them therein prudently and by most certain methods, how to preserve them from the snares of the devil and from the illusions of their imagination or their inexperience. Alas for the souls whose director is ignorant or blind! According to the Scriptures: "If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." *Caecus si caeco ducatum praestet, ambo in foveam cadunt* (Matt. xv, 14). The priest needs knowledge not less than virtue; they are the two eyes of every good director. Admittedly, the Holy Spirit could guide souls along the most perfect ways himself, dispensing with human directors. But such, since the institution of the priesthood, is not the plan of his providence. As we shall show more fully elsewhere, God intends every soul aspiring to perfection to submit to the control and approbation of a visible director who understands the discernment of spirits, in order to save it from manifold dangers of illusion.

Ascetical Theology is Useful to the Laity.—Countless is the number of souls who, with uplifted mind, aspire generously to lead a life that shall be nobler than the purely material life of worldly folk; souls envious of the beauty and beneficence of spiritual and truly Christian lives. When such souls lack a good director, capable of initiating them by word of mouth into the secrets and the practice of perfection, they must supplement this need by reading and studying the Holy Scriptures, the *Imitation*, "the most beautiful book that has ever been written by the hand of man, since the Holy Bible was not thus written," or some of the good devotional works written by masters of the spiritual life; and also by the very attractive reading of the lives of the Saints—spiritual science in action. However, in order to proceed with more method and result, these souls must begin by studying a good manual or treatise on asceticism. Just as, if ignorant of the catechism and the first initiation into the Christian life, they would not understand anything in reading spiritual works, so without a profound

study of that great catechism, more or less fully developed, in which an ascetical treatise consists, they would read with less fruit the great masters of this kind of life : before such works can be opened with profit, there is needed a key to their terminology and a synthesis of their doctrine. Armed with this key, no detail will escape us, we shall grasp its significance, we shall be able to enter into it, to assimilate it, and to live on its fulness.

This is equally true of every other science. For the study of the greatest writers, a preliminary initiation is required. Thus the *Summa* of S Thomas is only completely useful after the study of a good manual of scholastic philosophy. And this is even more important, if the spiritual works in question—masterpieces though they be—are not meant for beginners. To be able to connect in logical sequence the scattered truths that will be met in such books, the reader needs to be armed with a synthesis which only a manual or treatise of asceticism can afford him. Furthermore, the knowledge thus acquired by the laity considerably facilitates the work of a spiritual director. Oral direction will be shorter, without losing any of its value : the manual and the devotional work will complete and develop the helpful direction given by the priest.

Sources of Ascetical Theology.—As our task is one, not of discovering, but of bringing to light our subject, our sources will be the Holy Scriptures and Tradition, and also natural reason enlightened by faith and experience.

1. In the very first place, the Holy Scriptures, to wit, the Old Testament and particularly the New, which has so deservedly been called the divine code of ascetical theology. Not only do these books afford us, as nourishment for our piety, excellent prayers, such as the Psalms of David, for example, and the divine *Pater noster*, composed and recited by our Lord Jesus Christ himself ; persuasive examples for practising the most perfect virtues of the Christian life, or for making reparation by penance for our human failings ; but they also contain most complete instruction, dogmatic and moral, on the spiritual life and Christian perfection.

It is true that they do not give us a didactic and a scientific synthesis. The science of theology is the progressive work of generations of thinkers and theologians, methodically developing the truths that have been revealed. But never-

theless the entire substance of these revealed truths is combined in the inspired writings of our Sacred Books and particularly the New Testament.

The four Gospels contain all the teaching of our Lord upon morality and Christian perfection. Our Lord himself has condensed them into two principles: 1. *self-abnegation, abneget semetipsum*; and 2. *union with Jesus Christ* our divine Mediator, *et sequatur me* (Matt. xvi, 24). These same precepts of Christian perfection have been uttered again and again by the Evangelists under a thousand different forms, but in a way peculiar to each one of them.

Thus, S John, the apostle of divine charity, who had been privileged to lay his head on the heart of Jesus at the Last Supper, lays special stress on the interior life, so well symbolised by the parable of the vine: "I am the vine, you the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. Abide in me, and I in you, and you shall bear fruit abundantly" (Jo. xv, 5).

S John is the first to comment upon this divine precept of Christian perfection, and therefore the first master of ascetical theology. Often does he return to his favourite theme, the interior life, in the divine charity derived from the heart of the Incarnate Word.

S Paul, in his didactic epistles, is the second theologian of the same ascetical doctrine, fixing still more clearly its meaning by contrasting the flesh and the spirit, the old man and the new. He teaches that it is necessary to die to oneself in order to live in Jesus Christ, and share by baptism the death and the resurrection of Christ. The whole of the Christian life depends on this truth, and as this life is more or less completed here on earth, it marks for each one his degree of Christian perfection.

2. The second source is *Catholic Tradition* throughout the centuries. By its twofold magisterium, *solemn* and *ordinary*, it is the infallible interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. The solemn magisterium is the official voice of the Councils and of the Sovereign Pontiffs whose duty it has often been to come forward with solemn definitions in order to prevent and, if need be, to condemn every departure from Catholic doctrine and alterations of the sacred deposit of revelation.

The *ordinary* magisterium of the Church is the common teaching of the Fathers and theologians, and the con-

clusions drawn from the lives of the saints, particularly the canonised saints. Out of all this collection of truths there has been gradually formed a doctrine commonly accepted and taught. It is unanimous on every fundamental point, and if some points still remain under discussion, they are of minor importance, and they become apparent by degrees, bringing out the certainty of the whole still more. So, at the very least, it is always *temerarious* to deviate from this common teaching.

3. *Reason enlightened by faith and experience* is the third source of ascetical theology. It is reason that co-ordinates the truths of Scripture and Tradition scattered through a multitude of documents, in order to produce therefrom a rational or scientific synthesis. It is reason that defends this doctrinal synthesis or portions of it, against their detractors, rationalist or heretical, by replying to their attacks or to their criticisms with logical arguments of a sound philosophy. Finally, it is reason again which applies the principles and conclusions of ascetical science to truths known by observation, taking into consideration the temperament, character, abilities or vocation of each person, as well as differences of age or sex, time or place. In its turn, this experience of persons so differently circumstanced reacts upon the abstract principles of reason, and betters their adaptation by preventing their being pushed to excess or applied too absolutely. Thus do science and experience combine to form the perfect spiritual director.

How Ascetical Theology is Divided into Parts.—There remains only the duty of explaining to the reader the *division* which has been adopted in this exposition of Ascetical Theology—chosen because it seemed the most rational, and, above all, the most clear.

As Asceticism, ἄσκειν, implies striving to reach an end, we will *first* explain what is this *end* which has to be attained, or *the nature of Christian perfection*—false notions of it and the true notion ; its effects upon souls ; the stages or degrees in its attainment ; the distinguishing signs whereby to recognise it in ourselves or our brethren ; lastly, its utility or even necessity for lay-folk, religious, and priests.

Secondly, having explained the end to be attained, we shall describe the *obstacles* that hinder our progress, namely: temptations ; concupiscence in general, notably pride,

sensuality, and love of wealth ; and outside us, the scandals of the world and the temptations of the devil.

Thirdly, to counterbalance and to overcome these hindrances, we shall consider the *supernatural aids* put by divine grace so profusely at our disposal, forming as it were a marvellous spiritual organism in which our souls are clothed anew through baptism and the sacraments : first, sanctifying grace ; then the infused virtues and the attendant gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the beatitudes which are their expansion ; then we shall consider the working of the Holy Spirit within souls and the discernment of spirits. This study of God's grace will be completed by a study of the channels through which grace is brought to our souls, and of the means whereby we are led to recover it when we have had the misfortune to lose it.

Fourthly, in order to make effective use of this supernatural organism and to live a perfect life, there are spiritual exercises recommended to us by the Saints : these are the *means to be employed* in order to reach the end. Some of these are interior means : firstly, prayer, which is the governing factor, the mainspring, of all interior life ; then there is the examination of conscience which enables us to profit by its fruits in making us practise all the Christian virtues.

Among external means, we shall instance especially progressive confession, frequent communion, spiritual reading, particular devotions, a rule of life and direction by a spiritual guide.

Finally, *a fifth and last part*, merely a corollary of the preceding four, will have as its aim the practical application of the principles already surveyed, along the *three ways* which a soul usually follows in ascending to God and in practising an ever more perfect life : the purgative way, the illuminative way, and the unitive way, according to whether it is at the beginning of its conversion, or already somewhat advanced, or fully ripe at last for a perfectly Christian life.

II.—HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY is not yet written. Spiritual literature, from the origin of the Church to the present day, through twenty centuries of Christianity and in every part of the civilised world, is so prodigiously abundant that a mere list of books dealing with this subject would demand more than one volume ; to treat it exhaustively would require twenty.

However, the enormity of this task has failed to terrify one recent author, M. Pourrat, the Superior of the *Grand Séminaire* at Lyons, and he is in every respect worthy of special mention to the reader. Among our most able scholars, he is the first to throw open and to clear the way, in his volumes on *Christian Spirituality*[1] recently published (Paris, Gabalda) ; these volumes give us what we lacked, a complete summary of such a useful history.

Such works, themselves *résumés*, do not allow further condensation. It is necessary to read them and to draw freely from them, as the present writer has done.

In view of the narrow compass of this work, we shall be content to enumerate at this point, while briefly describing them, each of the many schools of spirituality that are to be found, at different periods, in the bosom of the Church ; the names and dates of the chief representatives of each school will be given, but for biographical and bibliographical details—they would be infinite in number—the reader will be referred to the work quoted, as well as to the great Dictionaries : ecclesiastical history (Baudrillart), theology (Vacant et Mangenot), and apologetics (d'Alès).[2]

But first of all, this somewhat dry list of names and dates must be preceded by a few indispensable remarks.

[1] Eng. trans. in progress (Vol. I, 1922 ; Vol. II, 1924). Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., London.

[2] To supplement further these suggested references, the *Liste d'auteurs* of M. Tanquerey may be consulted (*Précis de théologie ascétique et mystique*) ; also that of M. Letourneau (Short list of ecclesiastical books in his *Manuel des Séminaristes*), and Père Scheuer (*Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*. Nov. 1923 to Jan. 1924).

PRELIMINARY REMARK.—In the first place, why are spiritual schools so numerous and so varied, when there is but a single Catholic doctrine of spirituality? This seeming contradiction is easily explained and justified, and the *magisterium* of the Church has not only tolerated but approved and blessed them.

To understand this fact, it will suffice to remind ourselves that the Divine Exemplar proposed for our imitation, our Lord Jesus Christ, the visible image of an invisible God, possesses an infinite abundance of moral truth and beauty, and that each man, in his inherent powerlessness to survey in a single glance the vast synthesis of this abundance, or to imitate at the same time and to a high degree every example and virtue thereof, must needs analyse this infinite ideal, in order to render it accessible to himself; and for this purpose he must *emphasise* this or that feature in the divine Model, that he may maintain his glance thereon in preference to other features, making it the object of a special devotion and consecrating to it his powers of worship and his life.

To this general need, springing from the vastness of an object so disproportioned to man's innate weakness, must be added the natural abilities of each individual, his temperament, his inclinations, his natural and supernatural gifts[1] and hence his particular vocation; for these factors lead men to group themselves into such widely different religious orders, pious associations, and schools, that they might at times be mistaken for rival schools, when really they are merely noble rivals united by the same faith and worshipping the same God.

Herein is the explanation of that wondrous wealth and variety of ornament, embroidered on the royal mantle of Holy Church, of which the Psalmist sang: *Astitit Regina in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate.* (Ps. xliv, 10.)

AS AN EXAMPLE of these so-called divisions between schools—which are easy to disprove—we will quote the antithesis which a gifted writer imagined to exist between

[1] S Paul tells us (1 Cor. xii, 4): "Now there are diversities of graces, but the same spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. . . . All these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as he will."

what he chose to call the *theocentric* school and, opposed to it, the *anthropocentric* school of the seventeenth century.[1] The school of the Oratory, with Cardinal de Bérulle, would have taken as the centre or final end of its spiritual system the honour and glory of God, whilst S Ignatius would have had in view only the personal interest and salvation of man.

And yet, does not the fundamental maxim *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* belong precisely to S Ignatius? . . . It may be guessed, then, that the doctrinal opposition between the Oratorians and the Jesuits, and the brilliant comparison to the astronomical systems of Galileo and Copernicus, is a mere literary artifice based much more on appearance than on realities. Besides, taken literally, *anthropocentrism* would be a heresy, of which we would be loath to suspect S Ignatius or the Jesuits or, indeed, any pious catechism-pupil.

The truth in this controversy is the fact that man's salvation and God's glory wonderfully coincide, for God finds his glory precisely in delighting and in sanctifying men, whilst at the same time man finds in the will and glory of God his eternal happiness and his own salvation. To separate them would be an error and a heresy—whether by overlooking God's glory or by renouncing one's own salvation—but for the good of souls and the glory of God, we are allowed to *emphasise* them in turn, or to *stress* now one, now the other, whether it be by reference to the perfection or the hardness of the souls with whom we are dealing; or whether it be by the attraction of a special vocation: some dedicated by their apostleship to the salvation of men; others to the contemplation of God's greatness and his glory. These are, if you will, two distinct ways, but they are not separated into watertight compartments: their end is the same, to be attained by various methods of procedure, which far from being opposed, in practice are united together and harmoniously supplement each other.

Having once dispelled this prejudice against the multiplicity of spiritual schools—equally Christian and approved by the Church—we will proceed to enumerate them in brief, mentioning their chief supporters. But as these schools, properly so-called, only began to gain credit in the Middle

[1] Abbé H. Bremond, of the French Academy: *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, 6 vol. (Bloud), Vol. III, p. 23.

Ages, the period of theological *Summae* and syntheses constructed out of material which earlier centuries had accumulated, we must certainly speak of the patristic age which preceded the Middle Ages.

Certainly, in the PATRISTIC AGE there are to be found outstanding masters of the spiritual life: men such as S Clement (91-100), Clement of Alexandria (150-217), S Cyprian († 258), S Ambrose (340-397), S Augustine (354-430), S Leo (440-461), S Gregory the Great (540-604), S Benedict (480-543) who gave his rule to well-nigh all the monks in the West—and in the Eastern Church, S Athanasius (297-373), S Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386), S Basil (330-379), S John Chrysostom (344-407), S Cyril of Alexandria († 444), Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite (c. 500), S John Climachus († 649), S Maximus (580-666), etc.—but none of these has left any synthetic treatise on spirituality. The nearest approach to such writing, among the Latins, is Cassian's *Conferences*, translated recently into French by Dom Pichery (at St Maximin, Var), which summarise the spiritual doctrine of the monks of the first four centuries; and among the Greek Fathers, the *Ladder of Paradise* of S John Climachus, composed for the monks of the East; together with the *Mystical Theology* of Denis, the inspirer of all who study the same subject.

The men who constructed this synthesis of spiritual doctrine from all the scattered materials of the Fathers of the Church, were the monks of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They it was who conceived the plan of making a complete body of doctrine, and as they conceived likewise the plan of combining with one another their monasteries and of establishing monastic congregations, each of these spiritual families possessed henceforth its rule, its own life, its peculiar spirit, its mode of understanding and of practising Christian perfection; in a word, each family formed a distinct school of spirituality.

We intend to enumerate the schools that arose in the Middle Ages, and then those of modern times.

Schools of Spirituality in the Middle Ages

1. Firstly, the BENEDICTINE SCHOOL, whose monasteries were everywhere in the West. Its characteristic features

are liturgical prayer and affective piety. Divine worship is its great means of perfection. Among its best known supporters, the following references must suffice.

S Anselm (1033-1109), of the abbey of Bec, in Normandy. His *Meditations* and his *Prayers* are striking by the soundness of their doctrine and their tender piety.

S Bernard (1090-1153), of the abbey of Citeaux; whose mystical piety immensely influenced the Middle Ages.

S Bridget of Sweden (1302-1375). Her devotion to the Passion of our Saviour is manifest in her *Revelations*.

In later times, *Louis of Blois* (1506-1566) has left behind him a large number of minor spiritual works, of great value—which have been translated (Burns Oates and Washbourne, London).

Cardinal Bona, General of the Cistercians (1609-1674). Several editions of his didactic works have appeared, and extracts from them have recently been published at Fribourg (Herder).

Schram (1658-1720): His *Institutiones theologiae mysticae* is a classic.

Dom Guéranger (1805-1875), restorer of the Order in France. His well-known *Liturgical Year* has rendered an inestimable service to countless souls.

Cardinal Gasquet has studied the object and end of the religious life in *Religio Religiosi* (1919). [Cf. also Butler, *Western Mysticism*, London, 2nd ed., 1927.]

2. The Dominican School, characterised by dogmatic piety solidly established on dogmatic and moral science, and by the combination of liturgical piety with the apostolate, the contemplative with the active life.

S Dominic (1170-1221), founder of the Order of Friars Preachers, whose intention was to provide the Church with trained preachers capable of defending her against false learning.

B Albert the Great (1206-1280), who studied every branch of knowledge; he produced the first theological *Summa*, numerous works and spiritual commentaries on Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite.

S Thomas Aquinas, disciple of B Albert (1225-1274), who even surpassed his master, becoming the Master *par excellence*; in a masterly way he treated the main

questions about the spiritual life in his *Summa Theologica*, his *Commentaries* on the Gospels and the Epistles of S Paul, and the smaller treatise *De perfectione vitae spiritualis*: His writings upon Mysticism are scattered, and Vallgornera has tried to unite them in a complete treatise.

S Vincent Ferrer (1346-1419). His small masterpiece *De vita spirituali* was recently translated into French at St Maximin, Var.

S Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), whose *Dialogue* has been translated into English, as well as some of her very many spiritual *Letters*.

In modern times the Dominican School has upheld its traditions by adhering still more exclusively to the teaching of S Thomas.

Louis of Granada (1504-1584), well known as the author of the *Sinners' Guide*, the *Treatise on Prayer* and various lesser works translated into French (Paris, 1667).

A. Massoulié (1632-1706). Wrote various highly valued treatises in refutation of quietism.

A.-M. Meynard, whose *Treatise on the Inner Life*, an adaptation of the work of Vallgornera, is much esteemed.

Monsabré (1827-1907). In addition to his Conferences, *Gold and Alloy in the Devout Life* (Lethielleux).

Janvier, Conferences at Notre Dame, with an eloquent exposition of Christian asceticism (Lethielleux).

3. The Franciscan School, at once speculative and affective, recommends itself by its love of Jesus Crucified, of the crucifying virtues, and especially of holy poverty, as well as by its spirit of evangelical simplicity.

S Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), founder of the Order, and the earliest Stigmatic, bequeathed a spirit rather than a doctrine, and by this spirit had a greater influence than others by their books.

S Bonaventure (1221-1274), left a number of highly-valued treatises on asceticism and mysticism.

B Angela of Foligno († 1309). Her *Book of Visions* has been translated into English.

S Catherine of Bologna (1413-1463), studied temptation and the foes of the human soul.

In more modern times: *S Peter of Alcantara* († 1562), one of S Teresa's directors, wrote a short treatise on Prayer which has been translated into several languages.

Joseph du Tremblay (1577-1638) "L'Eminence Grise," *Easy Method of Prayer* (1626).

Mary of Agreda (1602-1665): *The Mystical City of God.*

D'Argentan (seventeenth century) well known for his *Conferences on the Greatness of God.*

Brancati de Laurea (1612-1693), favourite author of Benedict XIV.

Ludovic de Besse († 1910): *The Science of Prayer,*[1] etc.

4. The School of S Victor of Paris, although shortlived, did not fail to exert great influence on ascetical and mystical theology, by the original and daring character of its speculations. Taking the symbolism of the universe as its starting-point, it seeks to reach God therefrom. Its three chief representatives were:

Hugh of S Victor († 1141), who left several writings.

Richard of S Victor († 1173), whose best-known treatises are *Benjamin minor,* or a preparation for Contemplation, and *Benjamin major.*

Adam († 1177), who was the School's poet. Their works are to be found in Migne, vols. 176 and 196.

5. The German School, characterised by its daring speculations, neo-Platonic in tendency, and by its inspiration, which is frankly Dionysian.

Meister Eckhart, O. P. († 1327), several of whose propositions were condemned after his death by John XXII, but whose reinstatement has been lately attempted.

Tauler († 1361), whose *Sermons* were recently rendered in French translation, 8 vols. (Tralin).

B. Henry Suso, O. P. († 1365), whose works have been translated into English.

B. John Ruysbroeck (1293-1381), chief representative of the school, though Flemish in origin. His many works, often obscure, are explained by Mgr Waffelaert, Bishop of Bruges, in the *Union of the Soul with God,* translated into French by Hoornaert.

6. The Flemish School, closely allied to the preceding, leaves its speculations aside, retaining only its practical piety. It is with this school that the *Brothers of the*

[1] English trs. Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1925.

Common Life and the *Canons Regular of Windesheim* must be connected.

The best known among them is undoubtedly *Thomas à Kempis*, author of several works of piety, and generally considered as the author of the immortal *Imitation of Christ.*

7. The Carthusian School, founded by S Bruno in order to unite the eremitical with the cenobitical life. This is a school of practical mysticism embodying the instruction and realising the spirit of scholastic spirituality. Its main representatives were :

Ludolf of Saxony (1300-1370). His *Life of our Lord*, a monumental work of piety rather than a historical review, had a surprising influence. *Denis the Carthusian*, the Ecstatic Doctor (1402-1471), has become an authority on mysticism. The 45 quarto volumes lately republished are inspired by Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite and the German school. *John Lansperg* († 1539), famous for his tender devotion to the Heart of Jesus. *L. Surius* (1522-1578) is the hagiographer of the Carthusian school. He translated into Latin the German and Flemish mystics, thus rendering them known to all.

Modern Schools of Spirituality

Were we allowed to characterise in a single word the spirituality of modern schools and of recent times, we should readily say that it is becoming more and more *widespread*. In truth, this essential feature has never been wanting since our Divine Saviour sent his apostles to conquer the world, with the words : *Docete omnes gentes*. And it seems evident that fresh needs require a fresh apostolate. The more the faith of people, even the best of men, began to grow cold, and the more their spiritual life was threatened with destruction, so much the more was the zeal of true apostles destined victoriously to widen the extent of its activity beyond the cloister, to the most abandoned places.

The early Christians, anxious about their own personal sanctification, fled from the world which our Lord himself had cursed for its scandals ; *Vae mundo a scandalis* (Matt. xviii, 7). They took refuge in the deserts of the Thebaïd or in isolated monasteries, far from the noises of this world. And

when monks wrote letters or works of piety, they were speaking always to other monks, never to the people of this world.

For the latter, spirituality consisted in imitating from afar the virtues of the monks, while remaining in the world, practising therein, if not to the letter, at least in their spirit, the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, that is to say, practising to whatever degree was possible that detachment from self and from the world, and that imitation of our Lord, which is the very basis of all Christian life.

Thus did the spiritual writings of the monks serve for the edification of all alike, and of this we have convincing proof in the conspicuous example of the *Imitation*, which is to be found to-day in the hands of everybody, although it was composed both for monks and by monks. Later, but not until the sixteenth century, S Ignatius is to be found composing the *Spiritual Exercises* for the use of monks, priests, and faithful alike ; in the seventeenth century, an admirable innovation by S Francis de Sales—his immortal *Introduction to the Devout Life*—placed devotion and even sanctity within the reach of people living in the world. Finally, we must come down as late as the twentieth century in order to find reviews, ascetical and mystical, published by Jesuits, Dominicans and Carmelites, and read with interest by every instructed Christian.

In this way has spirituality, originally a monastic science, become gradually secularised and extended outside the monasteries. It seems that those monks who withdrew themselves, for their personal sanctification, into deserts and cloisters, are returning to the private homes of this world in order to sanctify in its turn the world, by communicating to it the treasures of the spiritual life amassed in monastic solitude.

Let us now enumerate these new schools of spirituality, and their most famous members.

1. The Ignatian School is conspicuous by its active, energetic, practical spirituality, pre-eminently suited to forming soldiers of Christ.

   S Ignatius Loyola (1495-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus. Besides his immortal *Spiritual Exercises*,

his *Constitutions*, his *Letters*, and also the *Pilgrim's Narrative* should be read.

His chief disciples : *Alvarez de Paz* (1560-1620), *Suarez* (1548-1617), *Lessius* (1554-1621), *B Bellarmine* (1542-1621), *Michael Gaudinez* (1591-1644), *Le Gaudier* († 1622) have left us, in Latin, substantial treatises on spirituality. The following have written books in French, translated in most cases into English :

Alphonsus Rodriguez († 1617), whose *Practice of Christian Perfection* has gone through innumerable editions.—*S Alphonsus Rodriguez*, Jesuit lay-brother, a contemplative.—*Louis De Ponte* (de la Puente), whose writings constitute an authority.—*Saint-Jure* (1588-1657), whose doctrine is akin to that of the school of Cardinal Bérulle.—*Nouet* (1605-1680).—*Bourdaloue* (1632-1704).—*Lallemant* († 1635) (*Spiritual Doctrine*) and *Surin* († 1665) (*Spiritual Catechism*) leaders of a school inclined to mysticism.—*Grou* (1731-1803) (*Manual of Interior Souls*).—*Pinamonti* (1632-1703) and *Scaramelli* (1637-1752), both Italians, authors of now classic treatises.—*De Maumigny* (1837-1918) (*Practice of Mental Prayer*) and *Poulain* († 1919) (*Graces of Interior Prayer*) are both authorities on mysticism.

2. The School of S Teresa, or the Carmelite School, has for the basis of its spirituality the " infinity of God" and the " nothingness of the creature." Its disciples devote themselves to *active* Contemplation and prepare themselves—if such be God's will—for *passive* Contemplation, by prayer and sacrifice.

S Teresa (1515-1582) remains its light and model. By her works, so subtle and so profound in their psychology, mysticism has been revived. The best English translation of them is that by the Benedictines of Stanbrook.—*S John of the Cross* (1543-1591), a disciple of S Teresa, completes her teaching on the passive purifications preparatory to Contemplation. English translation by Fr. Zimmerman, O.D.C.

The chief doctors of the same school are : *John of Jesus and Mary* (1564-1615).—*Thomas of Jesus* of Avila (1568-1627).—*Philip of the Trinity* († 1671).—*Antony of the Holy Spirit* († 1677).—*Honorius of S Mary* (1651-1729).—

Joseph of the Holy Spirit (1710-1740).—*Father Mary-Joseph,* present editor of the *Etudes Carmelitaines.*

The fundamental principles of S Teresa's spirituality and tradition were recently defined and published at the Madrid Congress (March, 1923).

3. The Salesian School, after the example of its holy founder, aims at spreading among all who live in the world, the practice of devotion and holiness. Its spirituality is congenial because it is entirely human and practical, but its basis is always in Christian sacrifice.

S Francis de Sales (1567-1622) initiated it in his famous *Introduction to the Devout Life* and his *Treatise on the Love of God.* There belong to his school : *S Jane Chantal, S Margaret Mary,* and *Mère de Chaugy.*

Among contemporary clergy animated by the same spirit, it is sufficient to mention : *Abbé H. Chaumont* (1838-1896) founder of the three Salesian societies.

4. The French School of the Seventeenth Century.—Its spirituality is merely the application to piety of the great dogmas of the faith, especially that of the Incarnation. Its aim is, particularly, to honour and glorify God Incarnate in Jesus Christ, and in his dwelling in our souls after our incorporation with Christ as effected by holy baptism. But as this union can only take effect within us by the destruction of the " old man " and by putting on the " new man," crucifying or austere virtues are the indispensable means of the new life and of Christian perfection.

Cardinal de Bérulle (1575-1629)—with such collaborators as *Ch. de Condren* (1588-1641) and *Fr. Bourgoing* (1585-1662)—was the founder of the French Oratory and of this school of spirituality, with which must be intimately associated *S Vincent de Paul* (1576-1660).—*J.-J. Olier* (1608-1657), founder of the Society of S Sulpice.—*S John Eudes* (1601-1688), founder of the Eudists.—*B Grignon de Montfort* (1673-1716), founder of the Missionaries of the Company of Mary, and the Daughters of Wisdom.—*S John B. de la Salle* (1651-1719), founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.—The *Ven. P. Libermann* (1803-1852), founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Mary.

Among so many striking works on spirituality, we cannot pass by the well-known writings of M. Olier: *Christian Catechism, Introduction to Christian Life and Virtues, The Christian's Day,* the *Treatise on the Sacrament of Holy Orders,* the *Pietas Seminarii Sti Sulpitii.* In these works are real treasures of the inner life to be found, both for priests and for layfolk.

Almost all M. Olier's disciples have applied to the formation of clerics the same principles of sound, substantial, dogmatic spirituality, notably *MM. de Bretonvilliers* (1620-1676), *de Lantages* (1616-1694), *Tronson* (1622-1700), *de La Chétardie* (1636-1714), *Emery* (1732-1811). Some, however, have, with considerable success, placed them within the reach of all states of people, as did *M. Hamon* (1795-1874) by his meditations, or *M. Ch. Sauvé* by his Elevations upon Dogma (*Jésus intime,* etc.).

5. The Liguorian School is characterised by the affective simplicity of its piety and its devotion to the Most Holy Redeemer: it aims straight at its mark by prayer and mortification.

S Alphonsus Liguori (1695-1787) was its founder. His highly valued treatises, ascetical and mystical, have gone through several editions and translations. Among its best-known representatives may be mentioned *Père Desurmont,* Provincial of the Redemptorists, and *Père Bouchage.*

6. Separate from these Schools must be mentioned: in the Middle Ages, the famous *Gerson* (1365-1429), Chancellor of the University of Paris, who treated of practically all aspects of spirituality and vigorously combated the mystical exaggerations of Meister Eckhart—*S Laurence Justinian* (1380-1455), reformer of the clergy in Italy—and *S Catherine of Genoa* (1447-1510) whose famous *Treatise on Purgatory* has been translated into English by Cardinal Manning.

In more modern times, specially noteworthy are: *L. Scupoli* (1530-1610), author of the famous *Spiritual Combat.—Bossuet* (1627-1704) whose ascetical writings are masterpieces: *Instructions on the States of Prayer, Elevations on the Mysteries, Meditations on the Gospel,* etc. His controversies on quietism are most striking for doc-

trinal orthodoxy and sound judgement.—*Fénelon* (1651-1715), whose tender piety is wonderful, despite some exaggerations that have been condemned. His *Spiritual Doctrine* (Lethielleux) and *Letters of Direction* have recently been published.

Benedict XIV (Card. Lambertini) (1675-1758) whose principles of asceticism and mysticism are always the most reliable and authentic.—*Card. Newman* (1801-1890) : *Meditations and Prayers.*—*Card. Manning* (1808-1892) has several minor works of great value.—*Father Faber* (1814-1863), whose beautiful books : *All for Jesus, Bethlehem,* etc., are well known.—*Mgr. de Ségur* (1820-1881), whose writings are everywhere available.—*Card. Gibbons* (1834-1921), *Ambassador of Christ.*—*Mgr Gay* (1815-1892), whose *Christian Virtues* will remain for a long while the subject of many meditations.—*Card. Mercier, Mgr. Gouraud, Mgr. Lejeune, L. Beaudenom* (1840-1916), whose delightful books have been reprinted (*Progressive Practice of Confession, Humility,* etc.).

Yet a study of ascetical writers far from suffices to provide an exhaustive knowledge of the history of Christian spirituality. There remain also to be read the *Lives of the Saints,* who have put into practice the spiritual life and true holiness. Here the field of one's studies might extend farther than the eye could see, nor shall we seek to set limits to an illimitable subject. Let us only draw the reader's attention—if he desire to betake himself to the real sources—to the mighty folios of the famous Bollandists, or, if modern works be preferred that are more easily within the scope of all instructed persons, the beautiful collection "*Les Saints,*" now in course of publication (Gabalda), under the editorship of M. Henri Joly, of the *Institut,* of which series more than a hundred volumes have already appeared with marvellous success, many of which have been translated into English.

PART I

PART I

The End in View: Christian Perfection

BEFORE embarking on our course, we must know what is our destination, and know it with enough precision to avoid losing our way.

With us, the end in view is Christian Perfection as our Lord and the Apostles have taught it to us, and as the Church, throughout the ages, has not ceased to instruct us by the voice of her Councils, her Sovereign Pontiffs, and her great Doctors, clearly specifying her holy doctrine; at times, in the vivid light of her anathemas, warning us against the morasses and the precipices which lie on either side of the narrow way; teaching us by the exemplary lives of countless saints whom she has ever been canonising as time has passed, even down to the present day; proposing them to us as our models, as a living commentary upon her teaching.

What, then, is Christian Perfection? In order to explain it, we will indicate: (1) *what it is not*; (2) what it is or *its true conception*; (3) *its excellence*, according to its effects on souls; (4) what are its *degrees* or stages; (5) the *relative necessity of possessing it* in the many widely different professions open to us.

CHAPTER I

Perfection : Wrong Conceptions

SINCE shadows make the light show forth more brightly, and since by being contrasted with error, truth is more easily understood, we can derive great help in explaining the true doctrine by refuting wrong conceptions of Perfection.

Now these wrong conceptions are countless, and in order to consider them shortly and systematically, we will divide them into two groups : those which are spread far and wide among unbelievers in the world, and those which are found as well among the faithful,—nay even among those who have a reputation for piety.

I. Unbelievers, who disbelieve in Christian virtue, believe still less in Christian perfection.

(a) Sometimes they treat it as an *unreal* chimera, because such perfection would be contrary to nature and therefore impossible in actual daily life, wherein each inevitably follows his own inclinations, according to the words of the classical writer : *trahit sua quemque voluptas*. For them, therefore, it is merely an empty sham, hypocrisy and charlatanism, or else a Utopia, dangerous by its very impossibility of realisation.

(b) Sometimes they grant that it is a *real* state, but of a low degree, morbid, a kind of *psycho-neurosis*, producing, by the excitement of sense and imagination, absurd peculiarities, superstitious practices, mystical gestures and poses unworthy of a serious mind and a free conscience.

We shall not pause to refute these prejudices. They blaspheme a subject of which they know nothing, and they deserve only pity and indulgence. Their gratuitous assertions are belied by the most conspicuous historical facts. The mere existence of so many saintly characters who have been the salt of the earth and the light of the world in the Churches of the East or West : S Ambrose, S Augustine, S Benedict, S Gregory the Great, S Athanasius,

S Basil, S John Chrysostom, S Anselm, S Bernard, S Dominic, S Thomas, S Francis of Assisi, S Bonaventure, S Teresa and S John of the Cross, S Ignatius and S Francis Xavier, S Francis de Sales and S Jane Chantal, S Vincent de Paul and S Alphonsus Liguori, S John Baptist de La Salle and the saintly Curé d'Ars,—not to mention so many others whose names alone would fill several pages, suffices to prove that sanctity is neither a myth nor an empty sham, neither a neurosis nor any other decay of human nature, but on the contrary a super-eminent greatness, the source of that prodigious influence for good which they exert, not only on the ages in which they live, but far beyond them, to our very own times.

II. Among the faithful, this same ignorance is to be found in matters of religion, although under other forms.

Some, modern-day Pharisees, place perfection in an empty, often a *superstitious, formalism.* Others, enamoured of the marvellous, in terrifying *austerities* or *stupendous* acts. Finally, lovers of free-thought in religion leave to each one's *fancy* the formation of his ideal of perfection. Each is allowed to create separately for himself " his own little religion."

Let us quickly survey each of these different categories.

1. The first and most numerous category, contenting itself with useless formalism, imagines perfection to consist in multiplying vocal prayers, rosaries, or religious ceremonies and devotional practices; or else in multiplying external observances: scapulars, medals, different statues and pictures. These formalists preserve merely the *matter* of piety, even exaggerating it in order to dispense with the *form,* that Christian spirit which, giving life to these practices, imparts to them their worth. Thus the formalism of such persons could well be termed a gross materialism, since they disfigure the Christian religion by suppressing its essential form and by retaining only its inert, lifeless matter.

We know how forcibly our Lord condemned the pharisaical spirit of such devotees, who observed scrupulously the least important of the Mosaic rites, while completely forgetting the most serious precepts of the natural law: " straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel," *excolantes culicem, camelum autem glutientes* (Matt. xxiii, 24). He calls them " whited sepulchres," because, whilst seeming to be alive,

they in truth are dead (Matt. xxiii, 27). We know likewise how Christ recommends us to pray with our whole hearts, and not with the idle mumbling of our lips. " When you are praying," he says, " speak not much, as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard."[1] Already had the prophet Isaias reproached the people of Israel with honouring God merely by vain words when in their hearts and conduct they were dishonouring him.[2] The same lesson is repeated for us by the *Imitation* in the following words: " Some place their devotion in books, others in pictures, and others again in external practices and formulas. They have God upon their lips, but very little in their hearts."[3] This is mistaking a caricature of devotion for its true likeness.

2. Such narrow, barren formalism easily becomes SUPERSTITIOUS. As is well known, superstition consists in attributing to certain objects, facts, or practices, a mysterious virtue—good or bad—which God has by no means imparted to them. Among these *objects* of superstition, let us mention talismans or charms, which would operate by their own virtue, *ex opere operato*, and not by the interior dispositions of their wearers. Among *facts* to which are attached superstitious prejudices, the unlucky omens of the number thirteen, of spilt salt, and of Friday, are known to all. Lastly, among superstitious *practices* of devotion, let us mention the so-called *infallible* prayers for success in an examination or in other matters; especially certain *imprudent vows* with promises of alms, by which that excellent religious practice, the vow, easily degenerates into a business contract: *do ut des*.

But is not religious formalism, considered by itself, already a beginning of superstition, seeing that it attributes the efficaciousness of prayer not to God's goodness nor to the religious dispositions in the heart of the suppliant, but to the very formulas which the latter recites, or to the material objects which he uses? Not at all. And the reason of this is that objects blessed by the Church do not dispense us

[1] Orantes autem, nolite multum loqui, sicut ethnici, putant enim quod *in* (*propter* in the Greek) multiloquio suo exaudiantur (Matt. vi, 7).

[2] Populus hic labiis me honorat, cor autem eorum longe est a me (Isa. xxix, 13).

[3] Quidam portant suam devotionem in libris, quidam in imaginibus, quidam in signis exterioribus et figuris. Quidam habent me in ore, sed modicum in corde (*Imit.*, III, c. iv, n. 5).

from these interior dispositions; they only add to our feeble prayers the more powerful efficacy of the prayers of the Universal Church.

From what has been already stated, some PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS can be drawn:

(1.) We must strongly and prudently oppose certain devotions which foster superstition much more than piety, and especially that spirit of advertisement which would make a traffic or business of them—especially if connected with pecuniary transactions.[1]

(2.) The religious practices of the faithful must be controlled, liable as they are to confuse the means with the end, the practice of piety with piety itself; and their vain scruples dispelled, when they are disturbed and worried about the least involuntary omission of insignificant formalities.

(3.) We must beware of any tendency to multiply pious exercises excessively, and we must prefer quality to quantity. In this particular, especially, nothing—however good—must be exaggerated.

(4.) Lastly, we must beware of any tendency to new and unusual devotions which mark us out from among our brethren. Let us remain content with those authorised and hallowed by the Church.

3. The display of a MARVELLOUS element in the lives of the saints has also given rise to mistakes about the true conception of Christian perfection or sanctity.

In the first place, it is their *frightful austerities* at which the faithful have wondered. Their protracted fastings, their macerations of the flesh, their heroic penances, have been mistaken by the uninitiated for their sanctity. In order to dispel this illusion, it is sufficient to recall the protracted fastings of the Indian fakirs or the celebrated Succi, whom nobody so far has dreamt of enrolling among the saints; or else the priests of Baal, slashing their flesh dreadfully in order to be better heard by their idol; or the Hindu fanatics, throwing themselves beneath the wheels of the car in which their idol is borne along. . . .

This comparison shows the mistake clearly. In this case, also, a distinction must be made between matter and form, the letter and the spirit. Is it through love of God that

[1] Cf. *Revue du Clergé Français*. Aug. 15, 1900, p. 624 *et seq.*

these great sacrifices are inspired? Clearly not. Now, without the love of God there is no sanctity—as we shall quickly show—and sacrifices avail nothing. In S Mark it is written: "(God) should be loved with the whole heart and with the whole understanding and with the whole soul and with the whole strength. And to love one's neighbour as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifice."[1] And S Matthew: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."[2]

Hence, heroic sacrifices are only a *sign* of sanctity, or a *means* of attaining it, not sanctity itself.

Sometimes, even, certain austerities are rather for our admiration than for discreet imitation. The present writer remembers having heard the famous Père Le Doré, who did not lack humour, forbid his young novices to imitate the austerities of S Aloysius Gonzaga, and order them to live longer than did that youthful saint, who died at the age of twenty-three. In this last respect, imitation was forbidden.

. . .

Hence some PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS can be drawn:

(1.) Always seek approval for our austerities from our director, who will never allow them to injure our health.

(2.) Like Père Lacordaire, who always kept a discipline, we are of the opinion that thoroughbred horses sometimes need such training, and that the little implement in question can be of service in subduing the flesh and in subjecting it to the spirit.

(3.) Always beware of extraordinary penances not undertaken in obedience to a director, which may possibly provoke vanity in ourselves.

4. A different feature of the MARVELLOUS in lives of the saints, at least in the case of mystics, has given rise to another illusion on the part of devout souls, whose enthusiastic devotion to certain *miracle-working saints* has led them to confuse sanctity with the extraordinary ways, with visions, ecstasies, prophecies, miraculous cures, and other amazing phenomena. Here likewise is a wrong ideal of perfection and sanctity, reserved for quite a small number of privileged souls.

[1] Ut diligatur (Deus) ex toto corde, et ex toto intellectu, et ex totâ anima et ex totâ fortitudine; et diligere proximum tanquam seipsum, majus est omnibus holocautomatibus et sacrificiis (Mark xii, 33).

[2] Misericordiam volo et non sacrificium (Matt. ix, 13).

In order to prove this, it is sufficient to remember that our Lord preached perfection in his Sermon on the Mount, when he spoke to the crowd—that is, to us all. It is to all men that he has said: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."[1] And S Paul, writing to the entire body of Christians at Corinth, said to them all without exception: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ."[2]

In like manner, S Francis de Sales writes his *Devout Life*, not only "for people quite withdrawn from the business of the world," but also for the men and women in the world, for ordinary people and for those in service, "for those who live in the town, in families, at court, and who, on account of their situation, are obliged to live an ordinary life as far as outward appearances are concerned, and who very often, under the pretext of a feigned impossibility, will not even consider undertaking to live a devout life."[3]

Christian perfection, therefore, or sanctity must not be confused with the *ways* that lead to it. There are *ordinary* ways, and also *extraordinary* ways. Therein lies the fundamental distinction between Asceticism and Mysticism. Extraordinary or mystical ways are recognised by the appearance of an *entirely passive* element, which is never found in the ordinary ways; it consists in the following facts:

God takes possession of certain chosen souls, generally the holiest, in order to make of them, as of Saul smitten down on the road to Damascus, vessels of election. God thereupon guides these souls according to his will; he imparts to them an infused knowledge and love, and with these first mystical gifts to help in their personal sanctification, he adds in varying degrees all the other marvellous gifts which are the outer and public manifestation of the former, for the greater edification of the Church.

Thus, the marvellous lives of mystical saints are not actual sanctity, but its most wonderful outward sign. In order to find the hidden source of this grand river, we must mount still higher, to the very secrets of the purest love of God, or of men's love for God, as will shortly be explained.

[1] Estote perfecti, sicut Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est (Matt. v, 48).
[2] Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi (1 Cor. iv, 16).
[3] *Introd.* Preface.

5. A subtler and still more frequent illusion consists in confusing *spiritual consolations* which we sometimes feel at our prayers and exercises of piety, with the essence of devotion and Christian perfection. There is great risk for a person to consider himself perfect when he prays with ease and when in meditation his heart is flooded with joy ; and, on the contrary, when he is afflicted with dryness, interior aversion and suffering, he is liable to think that he is relaxing and becoming less good. But this is a serious mistake. What counts in God's sight is *generous, persevering effort*, in the face of difficulties and even failure, to prove to God our love. In fact, the love of God abides essentially in the will, and not in the feelings : these contribute to solid piety a very secondary element, sometimes sweet, sometimes bitter, always varying—a feature with which we must learn to dispense.

6. Finally, the last error, THE MOST CONGENIAL, consists in fixing the ideal of perfection according to temperament or liking, inclination or fancy. Kindly sympathetic souls find perfection in relieving those in distress. Their ideal is alms-giving and the care of the poor. Energetic and irritable persons, in instructing and scolding everyone around them. Their ideal is distributive justice. Effeminate, lazy souls, in remaining perfectly quiet and exerting themselves about nothing : for them, the ideal is resignation.

" Each one," says the kindly S Francis de Sales, " depicts devotion according to his inclination and his fancy. One who is addicted to fasting will consider himself very devout so long as he fasts, though his heart be filled with spite ; and frightened by sobriety to dip his tongue into wine, or even water, will not hesitate to plunge it into the blood of his neighbour by slander and calumny. Another will think he is devout because each day he recites a vast number of prayers, though his speech is composed of angry, proud, or harmful words towards his servants and neighbours. A third will take alms gladly from his purse to bestow them on the poor, but he cannot take out sweetness from his heart wherewith to forgive his enemies. Another will forgive his enemies, but making satisfaction to his creditors requires the active compulsion of justice. All folk such as these are commonly thought devout, and yet by no means are they so."[1]

[1] *Introd. to The Devout Life*, pt. I, ch. i, to be read in its entirety.

It is indeed obvious that each of these dispositions of temperament and of character, if they contain an element of goodness, are also full of shortcomings, and therefore incompatible with true perfection. Even if, contrary to all possibility, they were free from serious shortcomings, they would only be natural, incomplete qualities, incapable of realising the supernatural ideal of Christian perfection. So we must look elsewhere, on a loftier plane, for the true conception of this.

CHAPTER II

Perfection. The True Conception[1]

PERFECTION, in general, according to the etymology of the word, *perfectum*, achieved, completed, and in Greek τέλειον, which means the same, is the state of a being lacking nothing at all that is proper to it. If it lacks anything which it should possess, it is incomplete, defective, imperfect.

The being that has no need of any complement, is God alone, the infinitely Perfect. All other beings are created needing something, and must attain to perfection slowly by acquiring what they lack. This acquisition is effected spontaneously by the evolution of the laws of nature, in everything that concerns vegetative and sensitive life. Plants grow and develop by their own powers; so do the bodies of animals; they heal their wounds spontaneously and repair their injured tissues. It is quite a different matter in the case of intellectual life, where that development is always more or less laborious and meritorious.

Human understanding, at birth, is utterly ignorant: it is a blank page, *tabula rasa*, on which nothing has yet been inscribed.

Now, we know well how much it costs both in time and effort to acquire ideas and knowledge and to furnish the storehouse of memory, which is utterly void at our birth.

Just as the mind aspires to know the truth which it lacks, and has to win it by a fight of main strength, so must the will, aspiring to goodness and virtue, and the heart, sighing after happiness and beatitude, unceasingly pursue those evasive objects which so often escape our grasp. These faculties will become perfect only when they have attained the object of their desires, when they possess them either entirely, in heaven, or at least relatively, on earth.

It is clear that *what is lacking* to each of our faculties, in order that it may be perfect, is the complete attainment of

[1] v. S. Thomas, 2a 2æ, Q. 184, a. 1-3; ***De Perfectione vitae spiritualis.*** Ribet, ***L'ascétique chr.***, ch. iv-vi.

the object which each one pursues, and which completes it because it is its last end. This is what S Thomas has clearly formulated: *Unumquodque dicitur esse perfectum, in quantum attingit proprium finem, qui est ultima rei perfectio.* (2a 2ae, Q. 184, a. 1.)

Applying this principle to the *religious life* of our soul, our conclusion is that its perfection will consist likewise in the attainment of its own object, and in the enjoyment of a certain degree of union with that object.

But the first question will be: *What is this object?* In order to find this out, we must begin by understanding properly the meaning of the word *soul* in the language of ascetical theology, and wherein it differs from its meaning in *psychology*, and even in its purely *biological* meaning.

In *biology*, the soul is the *form* or life-principle of a living organism. Thus, its perfection consists in *informing* that organism as well as it is able, by developing within it its vegetative and animal life. It is the sphere of the unconscious.

In *psychology*, the soul is the principle of rational life. Sometimes psychologists also call by the name soul the reasoning faculties of which it is the root and principle—especially of the highest of these faculties, to which they give the name of *spirit* or *mind* (*esprit*)[1]: the understanding, the heart, and free will. Now the perfection of these faculties consists in the fullest possible attainment of the *true*, the *good*, and the *beautiful*, which are its natural objects and ideal.

In *theology*, rising higher still, and considering what, in our spirit, is most lofty and divine, namely its infinite aspirations after the very source of the true, the good, and the beautiful, that is, after God, we come to an even more exalted conception of the religious soul and of the religious ideal.

Therefore the *religious soul* is not merely mind, heart, or will. And, indeed, how numerous in our own day are men of understanding, intellectual men, who live as if they had no soul or expend their minds in proving that there is no such thing!

The religious soul is not only the heart or sensitiveness,

[1] It will be seen that this terminology is far from being the same in mystical theology (see *Mystical Phenomena*, p. 4).

for one's soul can be lost through excess of sensitiveness; nor the will, for abundance of energy can be displayed in doing evil and in disfiguring one's soul.

The religious soul, then, must be that part of ourselves, the loftiest and the most divine, which by its religious aspirations tends towards God, the Source of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and towards eternal, infinite things.

This need of God, this desire for the Infinite, cannot be felt by animals or by children void of reason, nor by those men who live like beasts or grown-up children, without reflecting upon themselves: but all human beings worthy of the name—who are not perverted—feel it more or less according to the degree of their culture and sensitiveness, because it is the voice of nature. Atheism, according to the fine words of M. de Quatrefages, is only to be met with in nature *à l'état erratique*: it is an aberration and a monstrosity in the human species. And so S Augustine was able to exclaim: "O my God, thou hast made us for thee, and restless shall be our heart till it rest in thee."[1]

And elsewhere he adds: "I do not know what thou hast given me, O my God, in giving me a soul of such a nature: it is a marvel which thou alone knowest; nobody can understand it; and if I could conceive it, I should see clearly that after thee there is nothing greater than my soul."[2]

It is true that this abstract truth, if it is to become more easily perceptible to the heart, must first be lived. And every great thinker in whom our race takes pride, having undergone this life's experience, has not ceased to testify to this fact, whether by expressing it in sorrowful complaint, like King Solomon: *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, save to love God and to serve him*—or by celebrating it in inspired verse and song. Read again, for instance, Lamartine's 9th *Harmonie*,[3] or Victor Hugo's *Ode à Lamartine*, his

[1] Fecisti nos ad te, Deus, et irrequietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te. (S. Aug., *Conf.*)

[2] Quoted by Bossuet, *Lettres de Dir.*, t. xlvii, p. 590.

[3] Voilà pourquoi mon âme est lasse
Du vide affreux qui la remplit,
Pourquoi mon cœur change de place
Comme un malade dans son lit.
Pourquoi mon errante pensée,
Comme une colombe blessée,
Ne se repose en aucun lieu,
Pourquoi j'ai détourné la vue
De cette terre ingrate et nue,
Et j'ai dit à la fin: Mon Dieu!

Contemplations, or the wonderful pages of Chateaubriand, François Coppée, etc., and there will be felt the thrill, profound and elevating, of those infinite aspirations whereby the religious soul sighs after the ideal truth, goodness, and beauty, which is none other than God.

S Thomas, stripping this argument of all its poetical charm in favour of those who, whilst not disbelieving the Muse's strain, prefer to submit themselves to the guidance of cold, clear reason, argues thus:

"The object of the will . . . is universal good, as the object of the intellect is universal truth: whence it follows that nothing can satisfy the human will except universal good, which is not found in anything created, but only in God, because everything created has only an imparted goodness. . . . Hence God alone can fully satisfy the human will. . . . Therefore human happiness consists in God alone."[1]

Once we have taken our stand on the evidence of this rigid principle of clear, cold reason, we might leave to the individual's experience during life the care of proving the truth of the *minor*: no good here below is perfect, or capable of satisfying the infinite aspirations of our religious soul—or accessible to all, as must be the common end of all mankind.

(a) Not the goods of the *body*, whether natural, such as beauty or health . . . or artificial, such as wealth, comfortable living, etc. . . .

(b) Not the goods of the *soul*, whether interior, such as knowledge or virtue, or exterior, such as honours, glory, power, etc. . . .

(c) Not the goods of *body and soul united*, for their combination cannot change the nature of each, and as, besides, they never are all united in one person, nor within the reach of everyone.

It is not necessary to have lived many years in order to verify by experience the truth of this leading affirmation of our Sacred Books: God alone can satisfy the infinite

[1] Objectum voluntatis . . . est universale bonum, sicut objectum intellectus est universale verum: ex quo patet quod nihil potest quietare voluntatem hominis nisi bonum universale, quod non invenitur in aliquo creato, sed solum in Deo, quia omnis creatura habet bonitatem participatam . . . Unde solus Deus voluntatem hominis implere potest. . . . In solo igitur Deo beatitudo hominis consistit (1a 2æ, Q. 2, a. 8).

aspirations of our souls.[1] The truth is accessible of itself to all men of good will.

Let our conclusion be that, if the perfection of each of our faculties consists in perfect union with its object, the perfection of our religious soul must consist in its union with God.

It remains to define THE NATURE OF THIS UNION, for there are several kinds of union between God and the soul, even in this life.

1. There is firstly a natural and physical union ;
2. A natural and intellectual union ;
3. A supernatural union in the state of sanctifying grace ;
4. A union in a life of charity or practical love ;
5. A still higher union in the mystical state, in which this union becomes conscious.

The FIRST of these kinds of union is one which we venture to call quite material, for we enjoy it in common with all the animals, vegetables, and minerals. In fact God, as Creator, is intimately united with all created beings, by his presence or immensity, by his creative and conserving power which sustains them in existence and concurs in all their actions, by causing them to pass from potentiality to act. Thus, like all creatures, our body and soul—without being conscious of the fact—are plunged into the divine immensity as is a sponge in the waters of the ocean ; wherefrom they derive perpetually their being, movement, and life, according to the famous words of S Paul : *for in him we live and move and are* (Acts xvii, 28). But such a union, common to all, cannot distinguish the more perfect beings, still less satisfy the infinite aspirations of our mind and heart —the more so since in our case it is an unconscious union.

The SECOND union is of a higher kind, since it is an intellectual union, depending on the common or philosophical knowledge of God. In order to comprehend, man's mind must plunge its roots in the divine light, the universal cause of all intelligibility as of all intelligence. And it is in this very profound philosophical sense that S John said that God is the light which enlightens every man coming into this world,[2] not in the sense that God is the object, seen naturally,

[1] Qui replet in bonis desiderium tuum (Psal. ciii, 5).

[2] Erat lux vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum. (Jo. i, 9.)

but only the light enabling man to see and comprehend whatever he does comprehend; that is to say, that God is the first cause of the intelligibility of every object, just as he is the first cause of the intelligence of every human creature. Thus there is between our intelligence and God a further union of a natural kind, indispensable to all knowledge of God, though still of an unconscious sort.

A THIRD kind of union exceeds the requirements and possibilities of our nature, and raises our soul to a supernatural plane through sanctifying grace, a gratuitous gift—utterly gratuitous. By elevating the innate capacity of our human nature, it transforms it; it makes us adopted children of God, whom thereafter we can call "Our Father"; it makes us brothers of Jesus Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, and renders us capable of an ineffable union of friendship with God in this life whilst awaiting our participation in the beatific vision of God in heaven, and everlasting bliss. Then will God be seen face to face and without a veil, in his essence, and loved as he sees and loves himself.

But this sanctifying grace is still only a *capacity* for a new, God-like life, in union with God. It is less a life *in actu* than a life *in potentia* which needs to exercise and expand itself by passing into act. Thus it is still an imperfect union so long as it does not exercise its activity, however lofty its nature may be.

Thus, for example, after baptism a little child has received sanctifying grace, but its union with God cannot yet be called perfect. Rather, like a seed, it is in a dormant condition, until it begins to act with the earliest lisping of its tongue and its reason.

More clearly still, in an adult person, the state of sanctifying grace, far from being in itself a state of perfection, can be allied with very numerous imperfections, nay, even with venial sins. And, for example, a priest who daily stands at the Altar, and who there receives at each communion an increase of sanctifying grace, though he is rich in grace, yet an ordinary layman communicating but seldom, may perhaps be much richer in sanctity and acquired virtues. That wealth of grace of which he does not avail himself and which he does not make to bear fruit, remains a barren treasure of which he will have to give an account at the Day of Judgement.

The FOURTH kind of union—the only perfect kind—will

therefore consist in the faithful obedience of a soul which is in a state of grace, to every movement of that grace. It will mean union not in potentiality only but also in act, an active union, in Jesus Christ, by Jesus Christ, with Jesus Christ, *in ipso, per ipsum, cum ipso,* since he is the most perfect visible image of the invisible God, *Imago Dei invisibilis* (Col. i, 15 ; 2 Cor. iv, 4).

But what precisely will these acts be ? First of all, acts of *faith, hope and charity,* the three theological virtues which have God as their immediate object, and which most closely bind us to God. First, the act of *faith.* Although requisite to unite us with God, it cannot, however, suffice, for we can at the same time know God and hate him, like the devils, of whom it is said : *credunt et contremiscunt* (Jas. ii, 19). Besides, knowledge alone unites far less closely than love, as S Thomas observes : *amor est magis unitivus quam cognitio* (1a 2æ, Q. 28, a. 1, ad 3).

In the act of *hope,* separated from the act of charity, a soul can adhere firmly to God, it is true, and can love him, but in an imperfect way, since the soul does not yet desire God for his own sake, but because he is our good and our last end. Thus, it still is not a perfect union, but the proximate preparation for it.

It is therefore in *charity* that the genuine act of union consists. It brings us to love God for his own sake, not merely for self-interest ; to live for him, to devote ourselves to his service, to forget ourselves and to sacrifice ourselves for him, to lose ourselves entirely in him ; which alone can constitute intimacy, compenetration, the fusion of two lives in a common life. Then it is, as it were, the deification of man, who becomes a *divine man* in likeness : Jesus Christ still being, by the hypostatic union, the only *God-Man.*

This God-Man, most pure mirror of the Divinity, the Mediator between heaven and earth, is also the model most easy of access for our imitation. Let us conform our thoughts, our feelings, our wills, to the thoughts, feelings, and will of Jesus Christ, S Paul tells us,[1] and at once, with the theological virtues of *faith, hope and charity,* there will bud and unfold within our souls all the moral virtues, blossoming from the four cardinal virtues : *prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.*

Then only will be realised the union and fusion of our life

[1] Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu (Philip. ii, 5).

with the life of Jesus Christ our ideal, and with God himself, so far as that is possible upon earth, whilst we await its full consummation in heaven, for the life of glory in Paradise is but the full expansion of the life of grace here below—according to the words of S Thomas: "Grace and glory are of the same genus; for grace is nothing else than a certain beginning of glory in us." "In heaven, the life of charity does not vanish, but simply perfects itself."[1]

And yet, is there not sometimes on this earth a *fifth* union, even more perfect than the last one? Yes; and it is the mystical union, the nature and meaning of which remain to be explained by us.

Mystical union is not yet the beatific union of heaven, but we can truly say that it is a foretaste thereof here below, a kind of favoured anticipation, fleeting and unstable.

To the souls of the mystic saints who have been thus favoured, God no longer seems to be a hidden God, but seen in part through the veil of a more or less transparent faith. Such souls have at times a very distinct, lively and profound sense of God's presence within them, and of the operations of his grace, which along ordinary ways are always hidden and imperceptible. They experience a sensation, at once obscure and luminous, preventing them from doubting the reality of this divine contact and of the special union which results from it. This is a truly "*experimental*" knowledge of God and of divine things, as is formally laid down by the Carmelite Congress at Madrid, after S Thomas and Benedict XIV; it is an ineffable prelude of heavenly bliss, and therefore such a union has been called *fruitive*: for the mind and the heart are beginning to enjoy the actual possession of God.

We devote an entire volume to the task of showing the undeniable evidence of this fact, unanimously attested by every mystical saint in every age and land, as well as to that of giving the most reasonable theological and scientific explanation of it.

Here we shall confine ourselves to a single remark. If it is true that the human soul is intimately united with God by the first four ways which we have just been describing: by God's immensity and creative and preserving power—by his light rendering ourselves intelligent and everything

[1] Gratia et gloria ad idem genus referuntur; quia gratia nihil est aliud quam quædam inchoatio gloriæ in nobis (2a 2æ, Q. 24, a. 3, ad 2).—Charitas viæ non evacuatur, sed perficitur in patria (1a 2æ, Q. 3, a. 3, ad 2).

intelligible—by a supernatural action producing within us sanctifying grace, an inherent and permanent quality of our souls—lastly, by momentary transitory graces which make us live habitually by his life when we are faithful in co-operating thereto—if, we say, these four facts are certain to the eyes of reason and faith, and indubitable, how could it be possible for us never to have a consciousness of them? Certainly, such consciousness of the divine presence within us and of the workings of divine grace, is a purely gratuitous favour, by no means necessary to sanctity and salvation, but this favour, however rare it be (and this question we put aside for the moment) cannot *always* be refused to the most intimate friends of God. Therein is our reply to unbelievers. They object to us: were God present and acting in us as you say, we should be conscious of it, at least sometimes, just as we are sometimes conscious of the most intimate and the most hidden vegetative life. We answer thus: that is precisely what sometimes happens to God's closest friends. But those are unusual ways, a gratuitous privilege of sanctity to which not all the faithful can lay claim.

We can now repeat and condense all this doctrine in *three propositions*, which will serve to complete the understanding of them by each of our readers.

First Proposition.—*The soul's perfection consists essentially in its union with God by divine charity: to live for God. The soul gives itself to God, and, in return, God gives himself to the soul, in mutual love: this is the whole secret of Christian perfection.*

Holy Scripture is full of this heavenly truth. "God is charity," says S John; "he that abideth in charity abideth in God and God in him." And S Paul: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. . . . It is the bond of perfection. . . . Without it we are nothing. . . . If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. . . . I am nothing." And the Apostle ceases not to exclaim: "May the life of your soul be rooted and founded in charity. . . . Let all your things be done in charity."[1]

[1] Deus caritas est . . . Qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet et Deus in eo (1 Jo. iv, 16). Plenitudo legis est dilectio (Rom. xiii, 10). Caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum (Rom. v, 5).

It was also the keenest desire manifested by our Lord in his last prayer: "Let all my disciples be *one*, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be *one* in Us. . . . I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."[1]

This first proposition, so clearly contained in the Scriptures, may be found in well-nigh identical terms in S Thomas, in Suarez, and unanimously in every Catholic theologian. This is how the Angelic Doctor expresses it: "The perfection of every Christian life is gauged according to its degree of charity. Observe that each thing is said to be perfect in so far as it attains its own end, which is its final perfection. Now it is charity which unites us with God, who is the last end of the human soul. . . . And therefore, the perfection of Christian life is essentially gauged according to this charity."[2]

Thus, this first thesis is firmly established.

SECOND PROPOSITION.—*The perfection of charity itself consists in living for God,* IN UNION WITH JESUS CHRIST, *that is to say, in a perfect conformity of our thoughts, feelings, and intentions with the thoughts, feelings, and intentions of God, or of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is for us the most perfect visible image of the invisible God.*

The texts of Scripture in which is expressed this second truth, are very clear and very numerous. Perhaps these words of S Paul will be sufficient: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." "I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me."[3]

Caritas . . . est vinculum perfectionis (Col. iii, 14). Si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum . . . charitatem autem non habeam, factus sum velut æs sonans aut cymbalum tinniens . . . nihil sum (1 Cor. xiii, 1, 2). In charitate radicati et fundati (Eph. iii, 17). Omnia vestra in charitate fiant (1 Cor. xvi, 14).

[1] Ut omnes unum sint, sicut tu, Pater in me, et ego in te, ut et ipsi in nobis unum sint. . . . Ego in eis, et tu in me; ut sint consummati in unum (Jo. xvii, 21).

[2] Omnis christianæ vitæ perfectio secundum charitatem attendenda est. Dicendum quod unumquodque dicitur esse perfectum in quantum attingit proprium finem, qui est ultima rei perfectio. Charitas autem est quæ unit nos Deo, qui est ultimus finis humanæ mentis. . . . Et ideo, secundum charitatem specialiter attenditur perfectio christianæ vitæ (2a 2æ, Q. 184, a. 1). Per se quidem et *essentialiter* consistit perfectio christianæ vitæ in *caritate* (*ibid.*, art. 3). Cf. *De perfectione vitæ spiritualis*, cap. 1, n. 56, 7.

[3] Hoc sentite in vobis quod est in Christo Jesu (Phil. ii, 5). Imitatores mei estote sicut et ego Christi (1 Cor. iv, 16). Vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus (Galat. ii, 20).

The Apostle had derived this teaching from the very lesson of our Lord, often repeated, notably in the well-known parable of the vine and the branches. "I am the vine, you the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me."[1]

In no more graphic way could the ideal fusion of two lives, those of the soul and its Saviour, have been symbolised. It is not he who is transformed into us, but we who are transformed into him and by him. Indeed, every true friendship implies some resemblance or conformity of thought and feeling between the two friends: if this likeness does not already exist, friendship produces it, and this is precisely what happens in our regard. It has also been said that friendship implies not merely resemblance but even equality. However, this opinion is obviously exaggerated. Friendship demands a certain mutual give-and-take, under different forms, but not in any way sameness of condition or nature. Besides, between God and man, sameness of condition or of nature is impossible; resemblance must suffice in the conformity of desires and inclinations.

In order that these powers may become, by union, like to their object, it suffices to have as the object of our faculties and aspirations God himself, who is essentially the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.

THIRD PROPOSITION.—Finally, from another point of view, that of the subjective perfection of our spiritual faculties, *their perfection will consist in the habitual ease and facility which they experience in acting in everything through divine charity, in union with Jesus Christ.*

Thus, for instance, the perfection of the understanding consists in being able to learn with ease, if looked at *subjectively*, whilst from an *objective* point of view this perfection consists in having learnt much and in knowing much. This subjective facility of our progress in the life of perfection has been called "devotion," and the following are the terms in which S Francis de Sales graphically and picturesquely describes it to us:

"Having reached a certain degree of perfection, it (love) causes us not only to do good, but also to act carefully,

[1] Ego sum vitis, vos palmites. . . . Sicut palmes non potest ferre fructum a semetipso; nisi mansuerit in vite, sic nec vos, nisi in me manseritis . . . Sine me nihil potestis facere (Jo. xv, 4, 5).

frequently, and promptly; it is then called devotion. Ostriches never fly; chickens fly, though awkwardly, low down, and seldom; but eagles, doves, and swallows fly often, quickly, and high up: thus sinners never fly towards God, but always direct their flight along the ground and towards the ground; good people who have not yet attained to devotion fly towards God by their good actions, but seldom, slowly, and awkwardly; devout persons fly towards God frequently, promptly, and high up. In short, devotion is nothing else than spiritual agility and briskness, by means of which charity performs its acts in us, or we by means of it, promptly and with affection. . . . In order to be devout, we need besides charity considerable liveliness and promptitude in charitable actions."[1]

This facility to act always through charity is acquired by repeated acts, and though it is not essential to charity, but only accidental, it is, as it were, its flower and its fullest expression.

Such is the Catholic doctrine on the nature of Christian perfection, which is summarised in divine charity, *live for God*; the perfection of charity consists in living perfectly for God *in union with the life of Jesus Christ: Vivere summe Deo in Christo Jesu*,[2] so as to realise the words of S Paul: I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me: *Vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (Galat. ii, 20).

There remains for us only the task of forestalling an exaggeration often condemned by the Church.

OBSERVATION.—*This union of the soul with its God is in no way pantheistic.*

It will not be without some profit to make this observation, since certain false mystics have fallen into this mistake, or have not sufficiently guarded themselves against it. They can be arranged in three groups.

1. Some, like Meister Eckhart, a Dominican, founder of the German school of mysticism at the close of the thirteenth century, whose twenty-eight propositions were condemned by Pope John XXII, seem to have quite clearly admitted *identity of substance* between God and the soul, thus allowing themselves to be misled by the pantheistic principle of neo-

[1] *Introd. to The Devout Life*, pt. I, ch. i.

[2] J.-J. Olier, *Pietas Seminarii*, n. 1.

Platonic mysticism, that each human soul emanates from the *One*; and must return to lose itself, by the practice of contemplation, in the bosom of the primary *Oneness*.

2. Others, like Molinos, a false Spanish mystic of the seventeenth century, speak of the *identity of operative principle*, at least, if not identity of substance, between God and the soul: they are practically the same thing, or scarcely to be distinguished from each other.

Hence the celebrated quietist principle, "*Leave God to act*," which the semi-quietists have not sufficiently corrected, for God has given to his human creatures not only the appearance of being free causes, but also the reality of this gift, whereby the almighty power of the Creator manifests itself in all its majesty. This grave error was condemned by Innocent XI.

3. Finally, others, such as Ruysbroeck, a German mystic of the fourteenth century, seem to have admitted at least an *identity of consciousness*, by the annihilation of our own consciousness, it being transformed into the single consciousness of God within ourselves. But we will not labour this point, in view of the extreme difficulty of understanding what this worthy writer believed—it is a problem which still taxes the ingenuity of interpreters[1]—our present intention being, not to write an historical criticism, but to expound doctrine.

Let us, therefore, firmly insist that, in the union of the soul with God, the two substances do not fuse (*pantheism*), but only compenetrate each other through the intimate contact of substance with substance (*panintheism*), without causing any change of the soul's essence into the divine essence. *In ipso enim vivimus, movemur et sumus*, as says S Paul.

"The two substances," S Thomas tells us, "become united like a person knowing with the object known, like a person loving with the object loved."[2] Hence this union is accidental and not substantial: love tends to union of mind, will, and operation—which alone is possible—and not to identity of substance.

When, therefore, there is mention of man's *deification*, *divinæ consortes naturæ* (2 Petr. i, 4), it implies nothing

[1] Cf. Lessius, *De summo bono*, l. II, c. i, n. 7.

[2] Deus dicitur esse (in nobis) sicut cognitum in cognoscente, et amatum in amante (1a, q. 43, a. 3).

beyond participation by imitation and likeness, as S Thomas repeatedly states with noteworthy emphasis, for the question is an important one, requiring an exactness of terms free from any ambiguity.[1]

With this reservation we are glad to repeat Bossuet's celebrated comparison whereby the divine excellence of the human soul is exalted: "Whosoever would see a soul in which God is present by his grace (and this can only be seen by the eyes of the spirit) would think that he saw, in a sense, God himself; just as one can, in a sense, see another sun inside a clear crystal, into which—so to speak—the sun has entered by its rays."[2]

It is true that this particular effect of Christian perfection or sanctity is invisible, and can only be established by the eye of faith, but there are other visible and palpable indications, easy to establish by psychological observation; and it is of this latter sort that we intend to speak. They will enable us to lay our finger, so to speak, on the excellence of Christian perfection or sanctity.

[1] Gratia perficit ipsam (animam) formaliter in esse spirituali, secundum quod Deo *similatur*, unde et anima vita dicitur (in III, Dist. 13, Q. 1, a. 1). Assumptio quæ fit per gratiam adoptionis terminatur ad quamdam participationem divinæ naturæ, secundum quamdam *assimilationem* ad bonitatem illius, secundum illud (2 Petr. i, 4). "Ut divinæ consortes naturæ . . ." et ideo hujusmodi assumptio communis est tribus Personis et ex parte principii et ex parte termini (in III, dist. 34, Q. 1, a. 3).

[2] Bossuet, *Lettres de piété*, lettre xxv, t. xlv, p. 120.

CHAPTER III

The Excellence of Christian Perfection as Judged by its Effects upon the Soul

As Christian Perfection consists in the union of the soul with God by charity, and as charity is a mutual delight which leads a friend to participate in his friend's possessions, it follows from this that its effects in a human soul will produce a REAL PARTICIPATION, though in varying and less obvious measure, in the things of God, especially his divine *power*, *knowledge*, *liberty*, *joy* and *peace*. In fact, it is clear that in such a friendship it is not we who can enrich God, but only God who can enrich us, deifying us according to the well-known expression of S Augustine : *Non tu mutaberis in me, sed ego mutabor in te.*

This perceptible raising-up, this manifest deification of man, will be clear proof that such a union is not some subjective illusion of the mind, but that it is very real, since it is a kind of anticipation and foretaste upon earth of the joys of our heavenly country. Moreover, this participation increases or decreases according to the degree of perfection ; it is therefore the measure and indication of the latter. Exception must always be made in the case of certain extraordinary gifts gratuitously given, *charismata*, such as prophecy or the gift of miracles, which, being conferred upon a soul not for its own sanctification but for the benefit of the Church, do not always and of necessity indicate the exact degree of perfection possessed by the soul which enjoys them—though usually they are only bestowed upon Saints, as an outward manifestation of their sanctity.

Let us review, one by one, each of these manifest participations of holiness in God's gifts, and we shall better understand the excellence of that transfiguration which they effect in souls.

ARTICLE I

Participation in the Power of God

The governing POWER of God is the first attribute whereby he is revealed to us, and also the first sign with which he marks the holiness of the Christian soul.

Now this power extends over three domains: over *moral evil, physical evil,* and the created forces of *nature* and of *demons.*

1. In the first place, power against *moral evil,* that is, against all those interior passions which influence the ordinary man, and against all the external temptations of the world and of the devil urging us to evil.

" The very least grace from above," says S Thomas, " suffices to restrain the ardour of concupiscence and enable us to triumph in a struggle wherein so many other persons fail: *Minima gratia potest resistere cuilibet concupiscentiæ*" (3ª, Q. 62, a. 4, ad 3). And everyday experience shows us that this is entirely correct. Daily we come across souls strengthened against evil and living like angels, in the frail weak bodies of children, or young men and women whose purity and whose delicacy of conscience astonish us, but who are constantly armed by prayer and the sacraments.

Theology furnishes us with the secret of this enigma, in teaching that, on the one hand, God's grace abates concupiscence, the unfortunate result of original sin, and on the other hand, it strengthens the will against attack by means of infused virtue.

The Venerable Louis of Granada thus explains this transfiguration, developing his doctrine as follows: " Grace," says he, " by means of the virtues which it originates and incites, imparts to all the faculties of our soul a wonderful energy. . . . It strengthens our free will; moderates the motions of our sensitive appetite, preventing it from falling headlong into sin; revives and sustains us, lest we languish in the pursuit of goodness; and as each of the natural passions residing in these lower appetites of the soul are so many traps and dangers for virtue, the weak places wherein sin finds a way into the soul itself, grace puts a guard before every opening to keep back foes and to forbid them admission: this guard consists of the infused virtues, each of which regulates one of our passions."[1]

[1] Louis of Granada, *The Sinners' Guide,* l. I, ch. xiii.

We shall study more in detail, later on, this supernatural organism of grace and its defences. For the present it will suffice to establish clearly this governing power of the saints, which raises them far above moral evil and the weaknesses to which most other men succumb, even though they be, in the world's eyes, geniuses and great men. The saints alone, uplifted by supernatural grace, are truly and completely *supermen*, superior to human weaknesses.

2. Physical Evil, suffering, trial, is, after moral evil, the second stumbling-block of our poor humanity, and one no less fearful. Here also is seen the second triumph of the saints' supernatural power.

The greatest effort of ancient philosophy against the physical evil of suffering was that of the Stoics who withstood suffering by *denying it*. But this proud attempt was bound to collapse because it is vain and contrary to nature. Suffering cannot reasonably be denied, any more than a fact can be destroyed by the denial of it. But suffering can be transfigured, and in a wonderful way the saints knew how to transfigure suffering by the love of God, and especially by the love of Christ, suffering for us and crucified for our salvation. This transfiguration is truly the supremely perfect discovery of the genius of Christianity: no philosophy, no religion, before that of Christ, had either imagined it or suspected it. No one can deny Christianity this merit and distinction.

Not only has Christianity discovered the idea and the theory of Christian suffering by an inspiration from on high, but it has opened supernatural sources of energy and heroism hitherto unknown, whereby thousands of saints have been able to put this theory into practice, not accidentally but habitually and without faltering, throughout their whole lives.

Examples are plentiful: for instance, the sublime challenge flung by S Paul at adversity and trial, in the name of the charity of his beloved Christ: "Who shall separate us from the charity of Christ?" was his cry. Could tribulation, anguish, bonds or prison, hunger, nakedness, perils, persecution, torture? But we triumph over all these evils by the love of him who has so much loved us. "Nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might,

nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And S Andrew, greeting the instrument of his torment in these words: "O good Cross, who hast taken all thy beauty from the suffering limbs of the Saviour; Cross which I have so long while desired, so passionately loved, so constantly sought, behold thee at last granted to my prayers. Holy Cross, I welcome thee, I come to thee full of confidence and gladness. Receive me into thy arms, that thou mayst restore me to my Saviour, that through thee he may receive me who through thee redeemed me."[1]

And S Teresa, desiring either to suffer or to die: *Aut pati, aut mori!*[2] Or S Catherine of Siena, going even beyond this in preferring suffering to death: *Pati, non mori!* Not to die, in order to suffer more!

Doubtless these are instances of the most sublime heroism, but we need only look about us in order to assure ourselves that every truly pious and fervent soul has been able to understand, like François Coppée, "good suffering." To all who love God, tribulations seem to lose their bitterness and to become sweet. "When we love," says S Augustine, "we feel no pain, or if we do, the pain itself is loved": *Nam in eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut et labor amatur* (*De bon. vid.*, 26). Here, truly, is the echo of S Paul's cry: I abound with joy in all our tribulation; *Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra* (2 Cor. vii, 4).

So true is it that divine charity gives balm to our most grievous wounds, and refreshes our courage in the worst trials, which—far from hurting it—always turn to the profit of a loving soul, according to the words of the Apostle: *Diligentibus Deum, omnia cooperantur in bonum* (Rom. viii, 28). Herein lies the superhuman marvel of sanctity, what we may term its abiding miracle. Yet there is another one which, though rarer or less habitual, deserves to be noticed, since it is an undeniable historical fact.

[1] "O bona Crux, quæ decorem ex membris Domini suscepisti, diu desiderata, sollicite amata, sine intermissione quæsita, et aliquando cupienti animo præparata, securus et gaudiens ad te venio. Accipe me ab hominibus et redde me Magistro meo, ut per te me recipiat qui per te me redemit." (Legend of S Andrew.)

[2] "Suffering alone henceforth can make life tolerable to me. To suffer: thither do my most ardent desires tend. How often, from the depths of my soul, do I cry to God: O Lord, *either to suffer or to die*, this is the only thing I ask of thee" (*Life*).

3. Power Over Nature and Over Demons.—As this is an exceptional power, belonging to the domain of mystical theology, we defer its consideration to our other volume in which we have established the historical fact, together with its explanatory theory.[1]

Here it will suffice to recall the fact that our Lord expressly told his apostles that they too would accomplish wonders like his own, " and greater than these " (Jo. xiv, 12), and that this power was to be perpetuated throughout the centuries, without interruption, down to our own days.

In no better way can the limit be marked of the degree to which a saintly soul may participate in God's power, not only his power over moral evil and sin, not only his power over physical evil and suffering—which in itself is wonderful enough—but even in his empire and his dominion over the created forces of nature.

Like our Lord, the saints have driven demons from the bodies of those possessed, commanded either inanimate nature, the winds and storms as in the case of S Francis Xavier; or living beings and fierce animals, like S Francis of Assisi; or barbarous invaders, like S Genevieve; or, finally, like the saintly Curé d'Ars, they have exercised their supernatural mastery even over the most educated minds: *infirma mundi elegit Deus ut confundat fortia* (1 Cor. i, 27). Most of the saints were wonder-workers even in their lifetime; all, without exception, were such after their death.

ARTICLE II

Participation in Supernatural Enlightenment

So profound an aversion of the Christian soul from every form of moral evil, so great a power in that daily battle against temptations within and without which so easily drag down the majority of men—and also in that daily battle against physical ill and suffering which is transformed by divine love—presuppose in the soul A SUPERNATURAL LIGHT which focusses its judgements and its conduct according to new principles, far different from those of the world.

[1] *Mystical Phenomena*, pp. 567 ff.

Indeed, this is by no means the result of a blind unreflecting instinct, still less of a mechanical impulse, but the effect of a very deliberate will—a will very enlightened and completely master of itself. Even while acting under the sway of a divine instinct and without deliberation, the soul understands, approves, and loves.

It is clear, therefore, that God communicates to the souls of the saints a fuller enlightenment which is not granted to other men. Nor need this cause any surprise. For the union of divine friendship is a partial anticipation of eternal beatitude, which will itself consist in the vision and possession of God, the sovereign Truth, so that in proportion as a soul is more glorified hereafter, the more fully will it enjoy illumination and enlightenment.[1] It follows logically that on earth this union based on divine charity is also the source of the fullest enlightenment that man can receive here below. "Ye that fear the Lord, love him," says Holy Scripture, "and your hearts shall be enlightened."[2] "His unction teacheth you of all things."[3] "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."[4]

And the Angelic Doctor himself, despite his marked intellectualism, has summed up this entire doctrine in one monumental formula: "It is charity which causes the enlightenment of the heart"—CHARITAS CAUSAT CORDIS ILLUMINATIONEM (Opusc. iv. *De duobus præceptis*, ch. ii). Not that love is the formal cause of knowledge, but it is its motive cause and its final cause. Truth is perceived not by the heart but by the understanding; but it is by love that the knowledge of truth is brought about—and this knowledge, if it is to bear fruit, must find issue in love.

In like manner it is God's love which enlightens us, and his light which inspires our hearts more and more to know and to love him.

"If it is true," said the Ven. Louis of Granada, "that grace makes our hearts the abode of God, and if God, according to S John, 'is the true light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world' (Jo. iv, 9), it is evident that the more pure and holy a soul is, the more resplendently

[1] Qui plus habebit de charitate perfectius Deum videbit. *S Thomas*, 1a, Q. 12, a. 6, c.

[2] Qui timetis Deum, diligite illum, et illuminabuntur corda vestra. (Ecclesiasticus ii. 10).

[3] Unctio ejus docet vos de omnibus (1 Jo. ii, 27).

[4] Beato mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt (Matt. v, 8).

will the rays of God's brightness shine upon it, just as the rays of the sun are reflected more perfectly by a mirror, in proportion to the clearness and uniformity of the mirror's surface."[1]

We shall consider later those gifts of the Holy Spirit which are best suited to enlighten our souls and how they work therein. Let us only remark here that theologians have reduced these gifts to four: the gift of *Understanding*, the object of which is to enable us to penetrate the most sublime truths by revealing to us their depth of meaning, their combination and their harmony; the gift of *Wisdom*, which enables us to taste and experience these truths; the gift of *Knowledge*, which enables us to understand created things in their relation to God; lastly, the gift of *Counsel*, which throws light upon practical difficulties and rescues us from the perplexing problems of action.

We shall also see that this light communicated from on high is above nature, since we meet it at times in the souls of children, of women, of uninstructed folk who are simple and even boorish in the eyes of the world, but who yet possess—without ever having undergone a course of studies—a knowledge of the mysteries of God which is sometimes far superior to that of trained theologians. All who have had anything to do with the direction of souls are very familiar with this fact, which has not ceased to arouse their admiration and their astonishment. It is evident that "This is the Finger of God"; "*digitus Dei hic est*" (Exod. viii, 19).

Still more fully will the truth of this conclusion reveal itself when we come to speak of the revelations made to these souls with regard to the present, the past, and the future. But visions and prophecies, like the discovery of the secrets hidden in the hearts and consciences of men, belong to the domain of mystical theology, which requires a special study. The only reason why reference is made to them in passing, is to show clearly the possible degree to which privileged souls may thus participate in divine enlightenment. In the case of such souls, this revealed knowledge is among the most noteworthy effects of their union with their divine Friend.

[1] *La Guide des pécheurs*, l. I, c. xiv.

ARTICLE III

Participation in the Sovereign Freedom of God

FREEDOM is the highest manifestation of intelligence and power: therefore it is not surprising that a soul which participates in the enlightenment and the power of God, should at the same time participate in his holy freedom.

Of this participated liberty Scripture frequently speaks in admirable terms. It has been called the glorious privilege of the children of God: *in libertatem gloriæ filiorum Dei* (Rom. viii, 21). It is a freedom inseparable from the Spirit of God: *Ubi Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas* (2 Cor. iii, 17). A freedom to which all Christians are called by their vocation as Christians: *In libertatem vocati estis* (Gal. v, 13). A freedom which has been won for us by the Blood of Jesus Christ: *Qua libertate Christus nos liberavit* (Gal. iv, 31)—and one for which all creatures sigh in the expectation of their deliverance, as from a painful childbirth: *Omnis creatura ingemiscit et parturit usque adhuc* (Rom. viii, 22).

In no better way can we express at the same time the price of this heavenly gift, and God's wish to impart it to fervent Christians, the favoured children of his holy love.

Now this freedom enjoyed by the saints consists in release from a fourfold slavery: that of *evil*, that of *useless possessions*, *egoism*, and sometimes in a certain degree that of the laws of physical *nature*.

1. Firstly, RELEASE FROM EVIL AND SIN. What intense gladness for a soul which, perhaps during a very long time, has groaned beneath the weighty burden of passions, the world, vices and sin, to see them at last lying beneath its feet! What happiness to see the chains of this degrading slavery broken at last; to feel itself master of itself, freed from all its attachment to creatures and free to command them! Then it gives thanks to its Deliverer, and with David it sings the psalm of its deliverance: *Dirupisti vincula mea, tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis et nomen Domini invocabo* (Ps. cxv, 16).

Let it not be objected that a soul rescued from sin falls back into slavery to God, and that herein there is merely an exchange of service, and not entire exemption from slavery, according to S Paul's words: *Qui liber vocatus est*

servus est Christi (1 Cor. vii, 22). To this subtle objection S Thomas replies thus: "There are two kinds of slavery under God: the one of fear, the other of love. The slavery of fear is painful without being meritorious; for he who refrains from sin through fear of chastisement has no merit thereby, and in no way ceases to be a slave. On the contrary, the slavery of love is true freedom. To act through love of God and not from fear of his justice, is not to act as a slave but as a free man; for it is to act of one's own free will."[1]

In order thoroughly to understand this profound and enlightening reply, it is necessary to call to mind the sublime psychological doctrine of S Thomas on human liberty. Its two weaknesses here below are ignorance and malice: accidental weaknesses which are not in any way essential conditions of freedom. On the other hand, freedom increases in proportion as these weaknesses diminish and in proportion as a person advances in understanding and in goodness. In fact, man's freedom has two sources; first, the power of voluntary activity to determine itself, by passing from a first act—even a necessary one—to another act; for example, from volition of an end to choice of means; and secondly, the power of our reason to discover in any imperfect and contingent good which presents itself to us, the reason for its contingency or its non-necessity, which allow us to reject them and withdraw ourselves from their attraction. The power of reason is the final cause of free election; the power of the will is its moving cause.

Hence, the more we develop these two factors of freedom, the more we raise the degree of freedom itself. The more enlightened our choice is, the more fully does it enjoy freedom: the more disciplined our strength of will is, the more powerful it will be.

Thus, the more light and strength a reasonable being enjoys, so much higher will he rise towards the zenith of freedom. That is why there is more freedom in a just man than in a man who is the slave of sin; more freedom in a saint than in a merely just man; in an angel than in a saint; finally, more freedom in God than in all the angels and saints together. In God, freedom passes into the infinite, together with clearness of understanding and all-powerfulness of will.

[1] S Thomas, Opusc. IV, *De duobus præceptis charitatis*, ch. ii.

Such is the grand theory of S Thomas,[1] equally removed from Platonism, which fears too much light for freedom and seeks for it a sort of shelter in the twilight of ignorance—and from the excesses of rationalism which entrusts exclusively to knowledge the care of morality.

It explains to us clearly how the saint, participating superabundantly in the power and enlightenment of God, participates, in the same measure, in his holy freedom. According to the shrewd statement of our doctors : to serve God is to reign, *Cui servire regnare est* (*Pontifical*, ordination of sub-deacons).

2. After having released them from evil and from sin, the holy freedom of the children of God releases them from all subjection to the USELESS AND SUPERFLUOUS POSSESSIONS of this life, which are another kind of slavery. Who can tell of all the disorders occasioned among men by that immoderate, devouring thirst for gold, for money, superfluous possessions and the thousand vanities of this world ? They run to and fro, they fling themselves headlong into the search ; most of them exhaust their health and life therein, to no purpose ; and for the men who succeed in this insane strife, how bitter a deception to discover in it more thorns than flowers! Yet our Lord had warned them himself when, in a famous parable,[2] he compared riches to thorns because of the labour and the cares arising from their acquisition and equally from their retention. Thus they are at least a slavery, and the first counsel given by the Master to those who seek perfection, is to detach themselves from riches at least in spirit and heart, and even to strip themselves of them actually, in the case of those who aspire to complete perfection, and who have the sacred ambition of becoming the " salt of the earth "—that beneficial salt which prevents the world from dissolving and perishing in total corruption.

To the young man who asked him what he must do to become perfect, after having fully obeyed the law, the Master replied : " Yet one thing is wanting unto thee : go

[1] Cf. 1a, Q. 62, a. 8, ad 3 ;—1 *Sent*, dist. 25, Q. 1, a. ad 2—Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, l. III, c. v, p. 5. " The great superiority of a virtuous man is that, seeing truth in all things, he becomes, as it were, its rule and measure."

[2] Mark iv, 18.

sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me."[1]

The Evangelist tells us that this young man had not the courage to break his chains in order to achieve perfect liberty. But in every Christian century there have been seen generous souls taking up the challenge of the world, becoming poor of their own choice, not only by living detached from their wealth, but really stripped of it, and of such folk everybody knows examples; such as S Francis of Assisi espousing holy Poverty, whom he called his Lady and his Mistress, and whom he loved with an ardent affection. With her, he had attained the perfect freedom of the children of God, for whom there is but a single being worthy to be esteemed and sought, one single being of any importance, God himself: *Unum est necessarium* (Luke x, 42).

3. The love of God frees the soul not only from the riches and material possessions of earth, but also from all those more personal possessions which are another part of OURSELVES, and which tinge with EGOISM even the joys of family and friendship. Of course, such joys are valuable possessions, but too often they are tainted with self-interest, and they always need to be purified and sanctified by the love of God. Finally, *egoism* itself, that stout bond shackling us from our very birth and threatening to tyrannise over us until our death, must also be purified and corrected by the love of God. And here, S Gregory the Great tells us, lies our most difficult encounter: to free ourselves from what surrounds us is nothing in comparison with freeing us from ourselves: *Et forte non est laboriosum relinquere sua; sed valde laboriosum relinquere seipsum.* When a perfect soul has risen above everything and also above itself, it has reached the crowning point of holy freedom; its shackles have fallen away; it no longer loves aught but God, and it loves all else only in God and for God. This "holy indifference" is only a relative indifference, and far from being a lack of love, it ought rather to be called the summit of strongest and purest Love.

For example, does a mother no longer love her children—and even love them more—when she no longer loves them selfishly for herself, but in God and for God? It is the

[1] Mark x, 21.

same with every other earthly bond of self. The true and the most useful way of loving oneself is to love oneself only in God. Each has its proper place; so, the Creator before the creature; the love of God in all and above all. Here is the truth; it is the truth which sets us free: *Veritas liberabit vos* (Jo. viii, 32). In upsetting this order and this truth, in setting the creature in place of the Creator, the world has only produced disorder and tyranny. In vain does it call itself free: it is enslaved.

4. Let us mention, in conclusion, another far more remarkable degree of participation in divine freedom. Although extraordinary and in the domain of mysticism,[1] it must not, however, be overlooked here. S Paul wanted to be delivered from the PRISON OF HIS BODY, in order to enjoy to the full the freedom of the Spirit. Several saints have met with an answer to their prayers, at least in part, and on this earth have had, as it were, a foretaste of the heavenly bliss of glorified bodies. Several have been released from the bodily needs of this life; living without food or drink; enjoying gifts of levitation, bilocation, ecstasy even to the third heaven, mystical death; marvellous phenomena which will be discussed elsewhere, and which are, as it were, a manifestation of the freedom enjoyed by pure spirits.

ARTICLE IV

Participation in the Joy of God

At the outset, perhaps, the reader will not discover that joy, a DIVINE JOY, is a necessary and indispensable result of Christian perfection or holiness. Yet it certainly is, and Benedict XIV makes its habitual presence in a soul one of the conditions for beatification. Such, too, was the opinion of S Teresa: "I fear nothing so much," she wrote, "as to see our daughters lose this joy of soul; I know what a discontented nun is!" . . . "It is a nun outside the proper way, and lost if she remain outside, unless sadness is in her case only a passing trial."

In this respect the Saint and Benedict XIV only echo S Paul when he expressly tells us that joy is a fruit or a

[1] Vide *Mystical Phenomena*, pp. 536 ff.

natural result of God's Spirit in a soul: *Fructus Spiritus . . . gaudium* (Gal. v, 22), and this is the joy which, always and everywhere, he recommends to the faithful: *Gaudete in domino semper; iterum dico: gaudete* (Philip. iv, 4)

And so it is possible for us to say that morbid sadness is an obstacle in the way of sanctity, and that a sad saint would be but a sorry saint.

For this, TWO REASONS can be given: one, philosophical; the other, experimental.

1. God's joy and happiness come from his infinite perfection. Nothing is wanting to God: how then could he lack happiness? In the same way, our happiness must come together with our own perfection; that is to say, in proportion as we more fully participate, by union with God through friendship, in the treasures of the supreme Good, and as our need is satisfied by the gifts of his generosity. Or, to express it in philosophical terms: our happiness increases in proportion as the faculties of our soul are united with their object, and as their infinite capacity is more fully satisfied and filled with the essential Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, that is, with God. It is a foretaste on earth of the beatitude of Heaven wherein we hope to possess God fully.

2. The second reason is derived from experience. Every saint who has once tasted the friendship of God and experienced the heavenly joy of union with his Beloved, can no longer desire anything else. God is sufficient for him, and like S Francis of Assisi he exclaims: " My God and my All, *Deus meus et omnia!* "

We easily lose the savour of this world's treasures as soon as we have seen and experienced them at first hand: Vanity of vanities; *Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas!* declared the inspired wise man (Eccli. i, 2). Such is not the case with the supreme Good, and our Lord could promise the Samaritan woman that he would give her to drink of a marvellous water that should quench her thirst for ever, because it is the only true refreshment of the human heart. *Omnis qui bibit ex aquâ hâc sitiet iterum: qui autem biberit ex aquâ quam ego dabo ei non sitiet in æternum* (Jo. iv, 13).

But in order to be convinced of this, it is necessary to begin by making the experiment, according to the Psalmist's bidding: Taste first, and then shall you judge of it: *Gustate et videte* (Ps. xxxiii, 9).

In the company of sacred Love, there is nothing unpleasant

or wearisome, but all is contentment and joy: *Non habet amaritudinem conversatio illius, nec taedium convictus ejus, sed laetitiam et gaudium* (Wisd. viii, 16).

According to the celebrated remark of the Venerable Louis of Granada, the love of God is like honey. Not only is it sweet itself, but also it sweetens the tasteless or bitter things with which it is mingled. It sheds upon life's troubles such abundant joy, that they are thereby changed into genuine pleasures.[1]

The further a soul advances in divine union, the more this intimate joy increases in intensity and solidity. This will be pointed out elsewhere, by passing along each step of the mystical ladder and by rising from the ordinary *enjoyment* of fervent souls to *fruitive union ;* and from simple *quietude* to *ecstasies* and *consummated union*, which are foretastes approaching more and more nearly to heavenly beatitude.

ARTICLE V

Participation in divine Peace

It must needs be that DIVINE PEACE is a very precious treasure brought from heaven to earth, seeing that it was proclaimed in song by the angels above the Saviour's cradle, and since the risen Saviour expressed a desire of it to his apostles on each of his visits, saying to them: Peace be unto you! *Pax vobis!* and ordering them to bear it throughout the world.[2]

In very truth, this real peace in no way resembles the false " peace " which the world gives. It is our Lord himself who has drawn our attention to this fact: " Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," he said to his apostles. " Not as the world giveth, do I give unto you."[3] It does not disturb the heart (in the present) and removes from it all fear (in the future).

This is its distinguishing mark, its peculiar feature and the source of its inestimable worth. It is a calm, an entirely interior joy, contrasting strangely with the outward and

[1] Louis of Granada, *Sinners' Guide*, l. I, c. 16.

[2] In quamcumque domum intraveritis, primum dicite: Pax huic domui! (Luke x, 5).

[3] Pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis ; non quomodo mundus dat, ego do vobis. Non turbetur cor vestrum, neque formidet (Jo. xiv, 27).

noisy dissipation of the world's joys—joys which in the end leave behind disenchantment and trouble in the soul. It is also a full joy which satisfies the soul without leaving in it the least emptiness or the least care for either present or future. Indeed, if God truly is with us, who shall be against us? The friends of God have nothing to fear: whatever may happen to them will contribute to their well-being: *Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum* (Rom. viii, 28). Thus divine peace is at once intimate and complete: that of the world is but superficial and pitiably incomplete.

It is a foretaste of the beatitude of heaven. And so, in her hymns, the Church sings of it as a half-glimpsed vision of the heavenly Jerusalem: *Caelestis urbs Jerusalem, Beata pacis visio!* The Christian poet likewise extols it in his *Hymne au Christ,* thus:

Dès que l'humaine nature
Se pile au joug de ta foi,
Elle s'élève et s'épure
Et se divinise en toi. . . .
Les troubles du coeur s'apaisent,
L'âme n'est qu'un long soupir:
Tous les vains désirs se taisent
Dans un immense désir!
La paix, volupté nouvelle,
Sens de la vie éternelle,
En a la sérénité! . . .[1]

Such is the inestimable worth of this divine peace: let us next consider the CONDITIONS OF ITS EXISTENCE, which may be expressed in a twofold way.

1. Since peace—according to S Augustine's definition—is the "TRANQUILLITY OF ORDER," *pax est tranquillitas ordinis,* order having become perfect in a perfect soul, its peace must equally become perfect.

Such a soul has come to be perfectly in agreement with God, with its neighbour, and with itself. With God, since henceforward there is mutual friendship between them;

[1] As soon as human nature bends beneath the yoke of thy faith, it rises and is purified and becomes divine in thee. . . . The troubles of the heart subside: the soul is but one long sigh; every vain wish grows silent beneath an immense desire. Peace, a new found pleasure and a feeling of eternal life has also the serenity of such a life. . . .(Lamartine, *Hymne au Christ*).

with its neighbour, whom it has succeeded in loving as itself; lastly, with itself, since it has mastered its passions perfectly, and subjected the unruly instincts of its lower nature to a higher reason, as reason itself is subjected to faith. Thus, every rebellion has been suppressed, everything is controlled and pacified, order prevails perfectly, and peace with the tranquillity of order.

2. Or if the reader prefers to define peace as the REALISATION OF ALL OUR DESIRES, we should still find it realised in a perfect soul, and in absolute proportion to that soul's perfection. In fact, since a perfect soul no longer has any thoughts, feelings, or desires other than those of our Lord Jesus Christ—according to the ideal of S Paul, *hoc enim sentite quod et in Christo Jesu* (Philip. ii, 5)—and since, on the other hand, whatever befalls us is intended, or at least allowed, by God for our greater good, the soul rejoices in everything, as being its own will and its own desire. God, who is greater than the heart, has henceforth satisfied, and more than satisfied, all its desires.

The sufferings and tribulations that befall it are in no way to be regarded as an exception, nor can they either disturb or sadden the soul. Since these trials are meant by God either as an expiation for sin, or as an opportunity for further merit and a fresh proof of its love, a perfect soul not only resigns itself submissively to everything with a calmness constant and unwavering, but even gladly and lovingly accepts them as being a fresh point of resemblance to its beloved crucified Lord. Thus are joy and suffering reconciled in peace and tenderly embraced: *O bona crux! . . . Justitia et pax osculatae sunt* (Ps. lxxxiv, 11).

Therein lies the most sublime feature of the peace of Christ, which would of itself be enough to prove the divinity of Christianity. Not only HAS IT GIVEN A MEANING TO PAIN, as one writer has remarked,[1] but also it has rendered pain fruitful and redeeming. It is the Cross which has saved the

[1] "Do you know what advantage Christianity has over every other religion? *It alone has given a meaning to pain.* The religion which came and said: There is only one God; he has himself suffered, suffered for us; that religion which shews him on a Cross conquered men by appealing to their reason with the idea of the oneness of God, and by touching their hearts with the deification of pain. Moreover, marvellous as it is, this suffering God, depicted on a cross in the agony of dying, has been a thousand times more worshipped than the calm, serene, majestically beautiful Jupiter of Phidias" (Thiers, *De la propriété*, 380, 382).

world, and it is the Cross that will continue to save it and to extend the Redemption of Christ by the sufferings of saints, apostles, and martyrs, in whose heroic souls suffering increases and elevates the strength of their love, while in its turn this strength extends over all the moral and bodily miseries of unhappy mankind. It is the peaceful conquest of the whole world, begun on Calvary.

ARTICLE VI

Corollary.—The Signs of Christian Perfection

THE FIVE EFFECTS produced within a soul by the practice of a perfectly Christian life, which have been considered in this chapter, are also its *revealing tokens*.

Though, save in the very rare case of a private revelation, nobody can ever be absolutely certain that he is " worthy of love or hatred," according to the constant teaching of the Church,[1] nevertheless it can be recognised and conjectured with a very considerable probability, according to the considerations of these various tokens. Indeed, it suffices to establish that a soul participates habitually, at least in some measure, in the *power* of God over moral and physical evil ; in his supernatural *enlightenment* through the spirit of faith ; in his spiritual *freedom*, his heavenly *joy* and his blessed peace, in order to conclude with some degree of assurance that this soul is participating in God's life and friendship, since such a participation is one of the certain effects of that life and friendship.

The ascertainment of these facts suffices therefore in practice to assure a soul that it loves and is loved by God, and so to banish all temptations to discouragement, and to live in the peace of a purely filial confidence.

However, certain theologians are wont to express the same truth in another and perhaps a more striking way. According to them, just as when a being manifests *feeling*, *respiration*, *hunger*, or *movement*, we can with certainty conclude that it is alive—so is it in the spiritual and divine life.

[1] Si quis magnum, illud usque in finem perseverantiæ donum, se certo habiturum, *absoluta et infallibili* certitudine dixerit, nisi hoc ex speciali revelatione didicerit, anathema sit (*Council of Trent*, Sess. VI, canon xvi).

1. There can be no *feeling* apart from life. For instance, a soul which is sensitive to divine things, which fears offending God above all else, bears within itself the certainty that it is living with God's life.

2. The need of *breathing*, not the air of the world and its vanities, but the purer atmosphere of moral and supernatural truths confirms this sweet confidence.

3. *Hunger* after heavenly food: prayer, the sacraments, exercises of piety, are a further token of it.

4. Lastly, *movement* such as that of virtuous Christian acts, especially acts of humility, self-denial, and sacrifices accepted for God and one's neighbour, are a still more convincing proof of the life of God within a soul.

This theme, which it has been thought sufficient merely to suggest, can afford matter both for very striking oratorical effects[1] and also for very sound theological reasoning.[2]

[1] Cf. d'Argentan, *Conf. sur les grandeurs de Dieu.*
[2] S Thomas, Ia 2æ, Q. 112, a. 5, c.

CHAPTER IV

The Three Stages of Christian Perfection

EVERY extensive work has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Christian perfection cannot be exempted from this ordinary law of Providence, which is not wont to conduct souls by a single passage, but by successive stages to the summit of a perfect life.[1]

God begins by purifying souls and freeing them from sin ; then he exercises them in virtue, in the light of the examples afforded by our Lord and the saints ; lastly he unites them more completely to himself by the bonds of pure love. This it is which spiritual writers have termed the threefold way : PURGATIVE, ILLUMINATIVE, and UNITIVE.

This division is apparently very *old*. It is found in the works of Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite, from which it must have passed on to the writings of S Augustine, S Gregory the Great, S Bernard, Hugh and Richard of S Victor, S Bonaventure, Suarez, S Ignatius, S Francis de Sales, in a word, every ascetical or mystical writer ancient and modern.

Molinos and the quietists alone omitted or disdained it, because they exaggerated the function of pure love, going so far as to make of it almost the only Christian virtue, when it is the limit and not the beginning of spiritual progress.[2]

It must certainly be admitted that this division is the *most natural*. Before loving God with all our heart, with an habitually disinterested, pure love, we begin by loving him with an imperfect, a more or less self-seeking love, and again this imperfect love is itself usually preceded by the fear of divine judgements, according to the words of Holy

[1] It is a question here of *active* or *ascetical* ways, but it is almost the same with *passive* or *mystical* ways, wherein likewise the three stages can be distinguished : purgative, illuminative, and unitive. Each of these bears the mark of passivity distinguishing them from the active ways.

[2] This is the twenty-sixth proposition of Molinos, condemned by Innocent XI : " Tres illæ viæ : purgativa, illuminativa et unitiva est absurdum maximum quod dictum fuerit in Mysticâ, cum non sit nisi via unica, sc. interna."

Scripture : *Initium sapientiæ timor Domini* (Ecclus. i, 16), and it is under the dominion of this fear—servile rather than filial—that the first work is effected in purifying a sinful soul.

Thus, there are clearly three stages or three degrees in the soul's ascent to God, wherein we find three different spiritual domains, dominated by three differing feelings each more purified than the preceding.

Whilst it is the thought of divine judgements and the fear of hell or purgatory which begin to detach us from sin, it is hope and the attraction of rewards, both heavenly and temporal—like the beauty of our soul—which support our earliest stumbling steps in virtue ; finally, it is pure love which binds us to God's heart and makes us live in holy union with him.

Hence also there is need of three DIFFERENT AND PROGRESSIVE METHODS OF DIRECTION, according to whether the soul is in one or another of these three stages. Such is the conclusion formulated by Bossuet and Fénelon in the 34th article of the *Conférences d'Issy*. " It is certain that beginners and perfect souls must be directed according to different rules." Clearly, it would be seriously imprudent to treat every soul in the same way without taking into account its particular degree of progress in perfection.

However, it need not be supposed that these three stages are perfectly clear-cut, or that the passage from one to another can be measured mathematically. Certainly not. In moral questions such is never the case, because of their very complexity. They can be distinguished only by their DOMINANT CHARACTERISTIC.

Thus, feelings of fear are not so exclusively proper to the stages of imperfection, as never to be found among perfect souls. Even most holy souls have been known to remain for a long time, and sometimes to die, in the throes of fear. It is true that such are very rare exceptions, but not in any way impossible.

More often it is the act of pure love which anticipates its appearance, and which can even appear at the very beginning of the purgative way. S Paul struck down on the road to Damascus and other holy persons, suddenly transformed by an extraordinary grace, were at the same time penitent and inflamed with the purest divine love ; but these too are exceptions, as S Francis de Sales very clearly remarks : " It

is the beginning of our healthiness," he says, " to be purged of peccant humours. In a single instant S Paul was purged with a thorough purgation, as too were S Catherine of Genoa, S Mary Magdalen, S Pelagia, and some others. But this kind of purgation is quite miraculous and extraordinary in the realm of grace, like the resurrection of the body in nature ; so we must not aspire to it. The ordinary purgation and cure, whether of body or of soul, is only effected little by little, by advancing from progress to progress, with difficulty and slowness."[1]

Nay, more, if the soul only advances " little by little," it should be easy to subdivide each of these three stages into a great number of parts. Without losing ourselves among such subdivisions we will at least mention the more useful.

ARTICLE I

The Purgative Way

In the Purgative Way, when the soul begins to fight and to do battle against sinful habits, the dread of *mortal sin* inspires it at the very outset. It is on vanquishing this first slavery that the soul must concentrate all its prayers, mortifications, and strength.

It is the period of interior violence, of anguish and tears, and also of suffering caused by the fear of temptation and assault on the part of the enemy, when the soul is bitterly expiating the meanness which had reduced it to the state of slavery. When the passions have been sufficiently subdued, and when attachment to mortal sin has been overcome in the soul, there still remains the struggle against *venial sin*. But that is a less violent, a far less painful war, even though it prove far more lasting.

It is clear that an habitual leaning to venial sin is a genuine disorder, incompatible with a desire for perfection and filial union with God. Therefore, in this second stage, it is necessary to begin to eliminate from the soul that leaning, by a firm resolution to fight against it, and by striving to reduce more and more the number of such sins deliberately committed. Lastly, watch must be kept against venial sins that arise involuntarily or from weakness, though it is very difficult to exclude them altogether even from a perfect soul.

[1] S Francis de Sales, *Introd.*, I, ch. v.

To these two stages of the purgative way some writers add the struggle against mere *imperfections*. In fact, they make of mortal sin, venial sin, and imperfection, three degrees of a similar evil, differing only in gravity. But this is very inaccurate teaching. Sin is the violation of a law, more or less serious, whilst imperfection is only the neglect of a counsel. Now the neglect of a counsel cannot be a sin, unless it be accompanied by a formal contempt of the counsel—which is not usually the case.

Properly speaking, therefore, the struggle against mere imperfections is actually the practice of the life of perfection, and in no way resembles the struggle against evil and sin which characterises the purgative way.

But this struggle against evil—that is to say, against sin mortal and venial (as well as the passions and the occasions which lead us into it)—is still only the first stage in the life of perfection ; it is but the negative side of that perfection, the exclusion of all evil : it is not yet well-doing, or the positive practice of the virtues. Let us proceed at once to this second stage, termed the illuminative way.

ARTICLE II

The Illuminative Way

In the Illuminative Way, the soul, freed from all evil—at least habitual evil—henceforth looks freely towards the real good which it must reach ; its eyes, diverted from the deceitful pleasures of this world, turn eagerly towards the everlasting joys promised to every Christian, that is, to every one who becomes another Christ,[1] by imitating the virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Saints.[2]

Now it is by the frequent, habitual thought and contemplation of this divine model, it is by diligent meditation upon the sacred truths which he preaches to us in his Gospel, that there are produced in a soul—once it has been freed from sin—a kind of light and illumination which attract and guide it along the paths of all the Gospel virtues. Hence the name of the illuminative way given to this second period of the Christian life.

[1] Conformes imaginis Filii ejus (Rom. viii, 29).

[2] Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi (1 Cor. iv, 16).

It is not necessary to describe here the vast field of such theological and moral virtues, which lies open to its activity and gradual conquest. Of these, the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are, as it were, the overtowering summits, and the four cardinal virtues, with their attendants, the fertile, unbounded valleys which stretch away into the distance.

It is impossible in the space of a human life to cultivate everything thoroughly, and each one, in order to excel specially therein, must choose those virtues which are most necessary or most useful for his vocation, his profession, and his state, and also those to which the Holy Spirit inspires him with most attraction. So, for instance, every religious order has its favourite virtue in which it excels : one has the virtue of obedience, another that of poverty ; this one has the virtue of prayer and contemplation, that one devotes itself to divine worship and to the Liturgy, or else to various special devotions, etc. The result is that the bridal robe of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, is enriched day by day, unceasingly, with new and varied embroidery of infinite richness.

However, the spirit which animates that huge hive of spiritual toilers, over the entire surface of the Catholic world—supposing that they are still in the illuminative way—is much more the spirit of faith, hope, and charity, more or less self-interested, than of pure love. No doubt that spirit acts for God and for his glory, but so far it has not thought of making the complete sacrifice of self. While practising virtue, it seeks also its own interests, whether eternal or even temporal. Thus, for example, it pursues an ideal of personal beauty, the joys of a good conscience, the delight of spiritual consolation, etc. These are reasonable interests, lawful pleasures, provided always that they remain subordinate to the Will of God.

Certainly, it would be some disorder to have God no longer as the last end—at least implicitly—in each action, and to act only for self and for personal pleasure. But as soon as personal interests are subordinated to the Will of God, the order of ends is re-established, personal pleasure is no longer selfish, it is well ordered, and it is hallowed.[1]

[1] See the author's defence of a reasonable eudæmonism, against the exaggerations of Kant, the Jansenists, and the Stoics, in *la Liberté et le Devoir*, p. 246 *et seq.*

Thus, in giving alms or in performing other acts of virtue, I can legitimately seek not only the eternal reward, but even the temporal one, promised to these good actions, such as the joy of a good conscience or the moral beauty of my soul. Personal interest can be, not sacrificed, but merely corrected and made conformable to the divine order of things. It is rather the light of hope, the motive of imperfect love, which enlightens or animates this second period of the Christian life.

There remains the third, a still higher stage, in which the soul makes the heroic sacrifice of self-interest, or at least voluntarily forgets to think of it and leaves it in the background. Let us attempt to consider this stage.

ARTICLE III

The Unitive Way

In the Unitive Way, the way of pure love, there are also several degrees which a prudent director of souls must be able to distinguish, in order to avoid perilous exaggerations, the renewals of quietism. For each degree possesses its particular lights and attractions, and to try to impose on a soul tasks superior to the amount of light and attraction given to that soul by God at any one moment, would be to run the risk of very grave error.

Now, in pure love, four ascending degrees can be distinguished.

1. Habitual forgetfulness of self, in order to think only of the glory of God.
2. Habitual pursuit of the greater glory of God.
3. A constant state of indifference to everything else.
4. The choice, between two things which are equally pleasing to God, of that one which will be more crucifying to self.

Each of these degrees shall be explained, but it is necessary first of all to remove one objection which might stand in our path.

One Objection, indeed, occurs quite naturally to the mind of the reader. Is not love a precept for every Christian? Is it not the first and the most important of all the commandments of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, with all thy heart, and with all thy

strength?" Then, if this is a binding commandment and not a mere counsel, how can anyone make it the end of Christian perfection and the characteristic token of the third stage?

Theologians answer by the well-known distinction that, if the *negative* commandments, such as not to steal or not to kill, are always binding every minute of the day, *semper et pro semper*, the *positive* commandments, on the other hand, such as going to Mass or to Communion, cannot bind every minute of the day, although they are always binding, *semper sed non pro semper*. Therefore they only bind us to the performance of certain acts at certain periods, or at certain moments in our lives, whether they are imposed by positive or by natural law.

Hence, the commandment to formulate acts of pure love for God, or to act explicitly from this higher motive, is not binding for every moment of the day. Nevertheless, it is an ideal of perfection to which a Christian must endeavour to approach more and more, according to S Paul's words: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God."[1]

The gentle S Francis de Sales merely echoes S Paul's words when he likewise writes: "As for me, I do not know or understand any other perfection save to love God with one's whole heart. And if we really love God, we shall ourselves try to procure him this good of his glory, referring to his glory our being and all our acts, not only the good ones, but also the indifferent ones. . . They are deceiving you who feign other kinds of perfection."[2]

But this rule of evangelical perfection can be extended and applied, as we have just seen, in four ways each more perfect than the last, and it is this which remains to be explained.

I. The First Degree of Perfect Charity is *habitual forgetfulness of self* in order to think only of God's glory, or at least in order to think more often of that than of one's individual happiness.

If it is quite impossible to uproot thoroughly from the human heart the desire and pursuit of personal happiness —for every man naturally and necessarily wants to be

[1] Sive manducatis, sive bibitis, sive aliquid aliud facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite (1 Cor. x, 31).

[2] *Spirit of S Francis de Sales*, l. I, ch. xxv, xxvii.

happy—that desire and pursuit can be put habitually in the background. It can become unconscious or subconscious, and leave the ground free for pure and disinterested love of God—at least as the pre-dominating motive.

II. In the SECOND DEGREE OF PERFECTION, the soul is no longer content merely to pursue in all things and everywhere the glory of God, *ad majorem Dei gloriam.* It is the habitual choice of the more perfect which constitutes the second stage, and to which a great number of saints have sought to bind themselves by formal vows : among others, S Ignatius, S Teresa, S Jane Chantal, S Alphonsus Liguori, and many other heroic souls.

In this very perfect state, the soul being entirely preoccupied with the greater glory of God, weighs all its actions in order to distinguish and choose the one which will be of more worth to God. It exists solely to glorify God by every possible more perfect means. And it secures this without scruples, without involving itself in petty details, with a great breadth and liberty of spirit such as S Teresa has often recommended in word and example.

III. The THIRD DEGREE is the consequence of this exclusive absorption in the greater glory of God, and raises the soul to a state of complete indifference with regard to everything else. It is this holy indifference which S Ignatius so strongly recommends to us, in his opening meditation : " It is necessary," he says, " to make ourselves indifferent to all creatures in whatever is lawful and left to our choice ; so that, for our own part, we should not more earnestly desire health than sickness, wealth than poverty, honour than contempt, a long life than a short one, and likewise in all other things ; desiring and choosing solely whatever will more certainly conduct us to the end for which we are created, namely, the greater glory of God."

Thus, in this condition, not only do I forget myself, no longer heeding my own interests or my own happiness ; not only is my sole preoccupation the greater glory of God, but also everything else becomes indifferent to me, not from sentiment but by a free choice. I am as much prepared for suffering as gladness, poverty as wealth, contempt as honour, death as life, if such is for the greater glory of God. If there is more glory for him in my acceptance of work and suffering,

willingly do I accept them ; if there is yet more glory in my death than in my life, I accept death in like manner as life. Such is the nature of holy indifference.

IV. Fourth Degree. At first sight it would appear that no higher ascent is possible in the heroic degrees of a life of perfection, and yet every ascetical writer indicates a higher and last degree.

To seek solely and always the greater glory of God, and to remain indifferent to everything else, are still insufficient principles for our guidance in a case in which we have to choose between alternatives equally glorious and pleasing to God.

It may be conceded that such a case, if it is not imaginary, is at least not very frequent in everyday life. But its solution—as we shall see—supposes an habitual *state of soul* of a particular kind, and of a yet more heroic perfection. An example will explain this.

In the life of S Catherine of Siena, the story occurs of how, one day, Our Lord appeared to the Saint holding in his hands two crowns, one made of roses and the other one of thorns. " Choose, my daughter," he said to her. " But, Lord," replied the Saint, " thou knowest that I no longer have any will of my own, and that I choose always what is the most pleasing to thee." " Both are equally pleasing to me," replied our Lord, smiling. And the Saint, without hesitation, at once took the crown of thorns.

The guiding principle whereby the Saint solved the problem is obvious, namely : " Between two things that are equally pleasing to God, to choose by preference the one which is the more crucifying, and which makes us more closely resemble our crucified Lord."

The characteristic feature of this sublime state of soul is, clearly, the need of sacrifice, hunger and thirst after suffering, the Passion and the folly of the Cross. The more we, after the example of our divine crucified Master, are humbled and crushed by pain and suffering, the more shall we resemble him ; the more also shall we live his life, even so far as to be able to say with S Paul : " I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me." *Vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (Galat. ii, 20).

Herein lies the explanation or key of certain surprising words or exclamations which we might be inclined to con-

sider exaggerated or insincere, yet they are literally sincere and true.

" Either to suffer or to die," exclaimed S Teresa in her ecstasy ; and S Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, surpassing even that : " Not to die, but to suffer." S John of the Cross took as his motto : " To suffer and be despised for thee, O Lord," *Pati et contemni pro te.*

This, the sublimest and the most heroic state of soul, is the perfection of sanctity upon earth. It is at the same time the conclusion of Christian logic : if it is true that the perfection of a faculty consists in its most complete union with its object, and the total perfection of a soul in its most complete union with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, then the more complete this communion is with all the mysteries of our Lord, the more complete also will the perfection of that soul be.

First COROLLARY, against some EXAGGERATIONS.

Can the pure, disinterested love which we have been considering, and which habitually *forgets* to think of eternal reward and its own salvation, also *renounce* these things, whether by a single or even an habitual act ?

This problem must be subdivided. Is the renunciation in question merely *conditional*, hypothetical, subordinated to a condition which the soul well knows to be unrealisable and fictitious ? Or is it a question of *positive*, formal renunciation free from any condition ?

FIRST HYPOTHESIS.—The example is quoted of S Paul, carrying heroism so far as to be willing to become anathema for his brethren, and to be condemned to the fire of hell instead of them, if, *per impossibile*, such could have been for the greater glory of God.[1] Moses had previously expressed a like wish.[2]

Without wishing to enter into the discussions raised by these texts, and accepting the translation that is most open to criticism, it is obvious that there is no question of damnation in the strict sense, nor of separation from the love of God, since, on the contrary, it is the most heroic love

[1] Optabam enim ego ipse anathema esse a Christo pro fratribus meis (Rom. ix, 3).

[2] Aut dimitte eis hanc noxam aut dele me de libro tuo quem scripsisti (Exod. xxxii, 31).

of God which inspires such expressions. Hence it is merely a question of being deprived of every conceivable good save the love of God and salvation.

But if it is maintained that the texts refer to loss of God's love and of personal salvation, we must insist that the words *per impossibile* are manifestly understood or implied by the Apostle : " I have such desire for my brethren's salvation," he seems to say, " that for their sake I would have been willing *per impossibile* to sacrifice my own salvation."

For clearly, in sacrificing himself for his brethren, a person cannot perish, but rather must gain fresh merits and an even more certain salvation : *Qui perdiderit animam suam propter me inveniet eam* (Matt. x, 39).

Therefore, such a conditioned wish is neither impossible nor to be condemned, but it is a sublime momentary act, and not by any means an habitual normal state.

Second Hypothesis.—The solution is quite different if it is a question of positive, formal renunciation of one's own salvation and eternal happiness, without any condition. In that case, we maintain that such a renunciation, far from being a most perfect act of charity, is not even lawful.

Three proofs of this may be cited : from reason, Sacred Scripture and authority.

1. *Proof from Reason.*—To wish to renounce one's last end and one's salvation is to upset the essential order of nature. To attain salvation is for each of us a binding commandment, and not in any way an optional counsel. As for separating our salvation from our eternal happiness and God's glory, that is contradictory and fanciful, since God's glory consists precisely in making his children happy, by rewarding a hundredfold all who merit it.

As for diverting our will from our own happiness—from our final happiness—that is contrary to nature and is impossible, since our hearts are possessed by an inevitable, necessary instinct for happiness. In fact, that is the one human act which is not free on this earth. Nobody was ever found who wanted to be unhappy. Even a man who commits suicide wants to be more happy, or at least less unhappy. Renunciation of a state of happiness might be a temporary provisional means—it can never be an ultimate, positive end.

Thus, such an act of renunciation would be contrary to nature and fantastic ; it is impossible, and if it were possible reason would forbid it.

2. *Proof from Sacred Scripture.*—Scripture promises that he who loses his life for God's sake shall find it again a hundredfold : *Qui perdiderit animam suam propter me inveniet eam* (Matt. xvi, 25). Nothing that is given to God is lost. Hence a person who sacrifices himself for God and dies for his glory, knows full well that he will recover his life, and possess it even more fully. God owes this to his justice as much as to his glory and his goodness. Every other idea is contradictory, fanciful, and impossible.

Therefore, forgetfulness of self, hatred of self, self-annihilation are not an absolute but a relative death, the condition of a higher and a finer life ; they are an exchange, a transformation, a metamorphosis into a better life. Man's heart is never empty, and the more entirely it is emptied of attachment to self, the more it is filled with the life of God.

3. *Proof from Authority.*—That is the reason why Innocent XII unhesitatingly condemned in Fénelon's *Maximes des Saints* the eighth to the twelfth propositions, in which it seemed that this great bishop, through devout but regrettable exaggeration, approved, in the case of perfect souls, absolute sacrifice of personal salvation, and encouraged directors to allow and even to recommend such an act, which is evidently against nature and also against the divine order of things, which subordinates man's happiness to God's glory without ever being able to separate them, for God's glory consists precisely in making souls happy, at least when the trial is at an end.

The statement of all this doctrine can be SUMMED UP in a few lines.

1. The motive of *hope* by no means prevents the predominant motive of our actions from being really love of God, and we are not required to forgo this combination. Rather, it is often commanded in our lives.

2. The purest and most perfect love of God exacts habitual *forgetfulness* of self, and even of our eternal happiness, for the greater glory of God, and as a result deliberate indifference to every other good.

3. This forgetfulness never implies positive and absolute renunciation of our own salvation and hence our eternal happiness ; that is neither lawful nor even in reality possible.

4. It can sometimes allow—as a temporary act of sublime heroism—conditional renunciation, if such should be the order and the glory of God. In that case, one would be ready to renounce it, but *de facto* the renunciation cannot take place.

However, such a disposition, though less subtle than the preceding, is nevertheless far from natural ; hence the director must leave to the Holy Spirit the work of inspiring this notion if He judges it suitable, in the passive ways of the spiritual life, without ever being so rash as to interfere himself in this matter in the active ways.

We have known rash acts of such a kind, which have brought certain weak minds to a state of delirium and temporary madness . . . to such a degree as to necessitate the intervention of doctors, and the prohibition of diocesan authorities.

CHAPTER V

The Relative Necessity of Aiming at Perfection

THE question of this relative necessity can be posited in three respects: as regards ordinary *layfolk*, as regards *religious* pledged by vow to perfection, and as regards members of the *secular clergy*: bishops, priests, and inferior clerics.

Let us consider the question from these three aspects.

ARTICLE I

Necessity for the Faithful in General

For ordinary layfolk, the question can be asked whether the perfect Christian life can be fit for them and even, in some measure, be necessary for them.

1. There cannot be the least doubt that such a life is FIT FOR EVERY PERSON, without exception. Only, it must be practised in a different way according to each one's state and social condition.

"Not only is it an error, but a veritable heresy," says S Francis de Sales, "to banish the life of piety from the soldier's regiment, the tradesman's shop, the prince's palace, the family hearth, in short from secular vocations. The bishop must not be solitary like a Carthusian monk, nor the father of a poor family like a friar, nor must a tradesman spend his entire day in the church like a religious. S Joseph and S Crispin could be perfectly devout in their shops or workroom, S Anne and S Martha in their kitchens, S Sebastian and S Maurice among soldiers, Constantine, S Louis or S Edward on their thrones.

Devotion, if it is genuine, hurts nothing, but on the contrary, like a sweet scent, perfumes and purifies everything."[1]

The *theological reason* for this can be easily given.

Since Christian perfection is summed up in a single clause: love of God, and of one's neighbour through love of God—pure, disinterested love even to the point of self-forgetfulness

[1] Cf. *Devout Life*, ch. iii.

—it is not at all clear how any Christian soul can be exempted from this sublime ideal, nor how there can be any honourable state or profession which can prevent us from loving God thus, with all our heart, with all our strength and with all our soul, and from expressing that love in practice by acting habitually for God's greater glory.

But the proof from reason is negligible compared with the absolutely categorical *teaching* of our Lord and his holy apostles.

In the Sermon on the Mount, it is certainly to all without exception, it is to a most mixed congregation, that the Saviour preaches evangelical perfection, and announces the eight beatitudes of the perfect life : Blessed are the poor in spirit! Blessed are the meek! Blessed are they that suffer affliction! Blessed are they that hunger after justice! Blessed are the merciful! Blessed are the pure in heart! Blessed are the peacemakers! Blessed are they that suffer persecution!

It is also to the multitude, and not only to his apostles, that our Lord says : " Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."[1] Or again : " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself. . . ."[2]

Furthermore, it is certainly thus that the apostles understood the teaching of their divine Master. They in turn preached to all men Christian perfection. S Paul calls all the faithful *saints*, or *called to be saints : sancti vocati sancti* (Rom. viii, 28 ; Col. iii, 12) ; and he tells the Ephesians that they are all predestined to become saints : *Deus elegit nos ut essemus sancti . . . in charitate* (Eph. i, 4).

Likewise the apostle S Peter, in his first Epistle, recalls the words of God himself : *You shall be holy, for I am holy.*[3]

And a yet more remarkable feature about all these sacred texts is that they seem to suggest much more than a mere fitness or possibility of every Christian aspiring to perfection ; they suppose, besides, a certain *obligation*, a sort of commandment. This is the second question that is raised.

2. Is there, for every Christian, SOME OBLIGATION to aspire to perfection, each one in his own state ; and what can the nature of that obligation be ?

[1] Estote perfecti, sicut Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est (Matt. v, 48).
[2] Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum . . .(Matt. xvi, 24).
[3] Sancti eritis, quoniam ego sanctus sum (1 Petr. i, 16).

Before solving the problem, let us hear the words of the Fathers, the Doctors of the Church, and the ascetical writers speaking with authority.

Let one of the most celebrated of the Greek Fathers be asked: S John Chrysostom. He will answer without hesitation: "It is necessary for a man in the world, as for a monk, to live in a Christian way and to aim at a perfection which is the same for both, and from which they cannot fall away without wounding themselves fatally, as seriously in the one case as in the other; no one, I believe, whatever be his obstinacy and daring, will henceforward deny it." Such is the theme which he develops at great length in his *Apologia vitae monasticae.*[1]

If we ask the greatest Father of the Latin Church, it is the same teaching that we hear. "It must not be imagined," he says, "that these words of our Lord: *Be you also perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,* apply only to virgins and not to married persons, to widows and not to women whose husbands are alive, to religious and not to fathers of families, to clerics and not to layfolk. The entire Church must follow Jesus Christ, *accompanied by all its members,* who, after the Master's example, must also carry his cross and follow his teaching."[2]

The whole tradition of the Western Fathers, as of those of the East, can be summed up in a maxim that has become classic: "Not to advance is to go back," *In viâ Dei, non progredi regredi est.*

We shall shortly find that S Thomas, Cajetan, S Alphonsus himself, despite his wonted broad-mindedness, Schram and the most eminent theologians all share the same doctrine. But before multiplying quotations, let us explain it in order to justify it in the reader's eyes.

In fact, the following OBJECTION confronts every mind. Since perfection is the practice of the counsels, how can mere counsels be of obligation? Is not this a contradiction in terms?

Assuredly, it may be answered, a counsel is never *in itself* a command. But such it can indirectly become. Thus, for instance: when anyone is pledged to practise it by a vow or by a freely chosen state of perfection, that person is held

[1] Bk. III, French trans. Jeannin, t. 2, p. 46 *et seq.*
[2] *Serm.* 47, *De Divers.*, c. 7.

to it indirectly by the sacredness of his vow or his profession, as will be stated later in the case of religious and bishops.

Hence there can be an INDIRECT OBLIGATION to practise the counsels which of themselves do not bind under sin. This cannot be doubted. The only difficulty will be to decide precisely the existence, nature, and gravity of such an obligation for those of the faithful who have not taken a vow of perfection nor embraced a state of perfection, and these are very numerous.

Let us, *in the first place,* dismiss from our consideration the deliberate neglect of all the counsels through CONTEMPT —an extremely rare case, perhaps, but one that is not purely fantastic, although truly diabolical.

Clearly, such a formal, premeditated contempt of our Lord's counsels implies contempt of our Lord himself, and cannot be excused from grave sin.

" It is a grievous sin," says S Francis de Sales, " to despise Christian perfection and still more to despise the invitation wherewith our Lord calls us to it ; but it is an intolerable impiety to despise the counsels and the means of attaining them marked out for us by our Lord. It is a heresy to say that our Lord has not counselled us well, and a blasphemy to say to God : " Leave us ; we desire not knowledge of thy ways." It is a terrible irreverence against him who invites us with so much love and gentleness to perfection, to say : " I do not want to be holy, or perfect, or have any further share in thy goodwill. . . ." A person can certainly without sin refrain from following the counsels by reason of an inclination to something else ; but to profess openly not to want to follow the counsels, or any of them, cannot be effected without contempt of him by whom these counsels were given."[1]

In the second place, putting on one side every hypothesis of contempt of God, let us enquire whether such a DELIBERATE NEGLECT of the counsels befitting our state may not be gravely imprudent, and, therefore, a grievous sin.

What would be said of a business man who argued thus : " In the management of my business, it is enough for me to escape bankruptcy or the serious losses that might lead me into it. So I will only blame myself for great disorders and serious carelessness. In a word, to avoid bankruptcy,

[1] *Treatise of the Love of God,* l. VIII, ch. viii.

I will only do what is indispensable, and what will obviously be essential for me to avoid it." ?

Would not such reasoning be madness or supreme rashness ? In acting thus, we might reply that even what is essential and indispensable is itself never assured. By such offhandedness you are favouring natural indolence, which of its own force will drag you down and fling you sooner or later, despite yourself, into the abyss.

In like manner it is a fact of universal experience, that without piety and the practice of the counsels—for instance, mortification of the senses—nobody will persevere for long in a state of grace ; that, in order to avoid mortal sin with certainty, it is necessary to aim—by habitual practice of Christian mortification—somewhat higher than the target, like an experienced archer, in order to reach it with certainty ; that fallen nature is a running stream which carries us down, and that, even to remain stationary, we must still row.

" The incline carries us down," says the eloquence of Bossuet, " and our own weight flings us headlong. So that, in the way of salvation, he who does not run, falls again ; he who grows weary, soon dies ; he who does not do all, does nothing ; in short, to step slowly is to make a fall inevitable." (Bossuet, *4th Sermon on the Feast of All Saints.*)

That is why the Holy Spirit warns us that petty carelessness brings gradually in its train serious falls : *Qui spernit modica paulatim decidet* (Eccli. xix, 1). The best safeguard, then, against grievous sin is to strive to mount higher and to practise some counsels of perfection. " He that is just," says S John, " let him be justified still, and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still."[1]

After these explanations the reader will no longer be surprised that every theologian, without exception, gives the name of sin to the anticipatory *deliberate resolve* to neglect all the counsels, even if no positive contempt be implied.

The only dispute is on the GRAVITY OF SUCH A SIN. S Thomas,[2] Sanchez, Schram and many others, assert that it may go so far as to become a mortal sin.

Cajetan, S Alphonsus, the Salmanticenses and Scaramelli, are of the opinion that ordinarily it is only a venial sin,

[1] Qui justus est, justificetur adhuc, et sanctus, sanctificetur adhuc (Apoc. xxii, 11).

[2] 2a 2æ, Q. 186, a. 2.

because the danger to which such a deliberate resolve exposes us of committing grievous sin is usually only a remote danger. *Ratio est,* says S Alphonsus, *quia revera tale propositum tantum remote conducit ad mortale.*[1]

But if there is no deliberate forethought, only ignorance, lack of reflection, carelessness, or negligence and even cowardice, every omission of a counsel is no longer a sin but an imperfection.

This negligence none the less constitutes a lasting danger, since it puts us in a state of tepidity and on the way to mortal sin. There remains therefore a general though indirect command to aim at perfection and at times to practise it, at least from motives of prudence, according to the means and facilities of our state.

Let another motive be added, taken from *social order.* At bottom, Christian perfection is only love of God to the extent of self-forgetfulness. . . . Now, without forgetfulness of self serving to moderate the struggle for life and the excesses of individualism, society would speedily sink back into the state of savagery. As our Lord declared, perfect Christians are the salt of the earth, and there must be some of them, not merely in the clergy and the monasteries, but in the outside world itself, in order to save it from falling into dissolution and returning to barbarism.[2]

ARTICLE II

Necessity for Religious[3]

For religious pledged by simple or solemn vows to the practice of religious perfection, it is obvious that the counsel to aim at a perfect life, which is common to even layfolk without exception—and to each one according to his profession—becomes in their regard a true obligation of their state.

In the case of urging the laity to perfection, appeal can only be made to their goodwill, their discretion and their

[1] *Theol. mor.,* l. IV, n. 12. Quæritur . . . an quilibet christianus graviter peccet, si proponat committere omnia venialia.

[2] See Brunetière, *Education et Instruction,* p. 22, 88, etc.

[3] See *Code of Canon Law,* can. 487-672 ; Suarez, *De Religione,* tr. vii ; Valuy, *Les vertus religieuses* ; Gautrelet, *Traité de l'état religieux* ; Mgr Gay, *De la vie et des vertus chrétiennes,* tr. ii.

wisdom, as also to the beauty of the lofty ideal of Christian perfection, and to the good things which even on earth it affords for the happiness of the community and the individual. In the case of religious, on the contrary, appeal must be made to their more or less solid and determined promises. They are bound to submit to the yoke of monastic discipline, once it is freely and irrevocably accepted. Henceforward it is for them one of the duties of their state, implying certain fixed means of perfection.

This state is usually called a *state of perfection*, a very equivocal phrase, it is true, for a layman can be perfect without being in this said state of perfection, while a religious can be therein without being perfect The state of perfection, therefore, implies only one thing: the contraction of an obligation to strive after perfection.[1]

Moreover this obligation is *limited*; it does not embrace all the evangelical counsels, still less the obligation to aim always at what is most perfect; but it confines itself solely to the counsels proper to a single rule, the rule of the Order or monastery which the person in question has entered.

Thus, for example, the care of sick persons, or of the poor, the ransom of captives, works of instruction or preaching are only binding on certain kinds of Orders and not on all.

In fact, the *manner* of observing certain counsels, such, for instance, as that of poverty, is not the same with Capuchins as with Jesuits. Thus it is that the Rule of which a person makes profession, is the factor deciding the number and the nature of the evangelical counsels to which that person has pledged himself, as well as the manner in which he is to practise them.[2]

However, there is something that is common to all religious Orders, constituting the very essence of the religious life; namely, the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Everybody knows how savagely and violently Luther, Wycliffe, and the other Reformers, attacked the very principle of these vows, as if they rendered the evangelical counsels and even the commandments impossible to practise. But experience has proved that these three vows gave rise

[1] Non oportet quod quicumque est in religione, jam sit perfectus, sed quod ad perfectionem tendat (*S Thomas*, 2a 2æ, Q. 186, art. 1, ad 3).

[2] See Gautrelet-Choupin, *De l'Etat religieux*, wherein are to be found some most useful details concerning the obligations of religious rules.

to the unconquerable strength and the unsullied glory of the religious Orders. The Protestant heresy, on the other hand, was fitly condemned and crushed by the Church, especially in the eighth session of the Council of Constance, held in 1418.[1]

There seems to have been a re-appearance of the same error in Americanism, immediately condemned by Leo XIII in his encyclical *Testem benevolentiæ* of January 22, 1899.

Now, as all religious have contracted a real obligation to aim at perfection, through exact obedience to their monastic rule, it is necessary to measure the gravity of this obligation.

The opinion of theologians is unanimous on this point, and it can be summarised thus :

The rule *considered in its entirety* obliges *sub gravi*, so that a religious who resolved definitely to observe his rule no longer, and not to aim at perfection any more by obeying it, or to live henceforward without caring any longer for it, would commit a mortal sin.[2] According to the expression of Denis the Carthusian, he would even be " in a constant state of mortal sin."[3]

It is generally acknowledged that to embrace a rule of perfect life, and to pledge oneself to it by public vow, constitutes, in fact, a stern and serious obligation.

However, it must be clearly understood that this obligation is grave only in so far as the general monastic rule is considered. In the details of each of its articles, the rule does not bind so gravely. Every time that a point of rule does not directly affect the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, that point—although a regulation—does not bind, *in itself*, even under pain of venial sin. Thus there are some monastic rules which are simply *directive*, and their omission is not a sin but an imperfection. Such is, in fact, the formal intention of monastic legislators—as may be seen, for instance, in the Dominican constitutions.

From the point of view of the founders of religious Orders, nothing could be wiser. It can be of no use to increase the yoke to such a degree. If every point of a rule—whatever might be its relative importance—always obliged under pain

[1] *Enchiridion*, p. 188.

[2] Peccat mortaliter religiosus qui firmiter statuit non tendere ad perfectionem, vel nullo modo de ea curare (S Liguori, *Theol. mor.*, l. IV, n. 18).

[3] Imo tota vita eorum est quasi quoddam peccare continuum (*De Reform. claustr.*, a. 6).

of venial sin, the religious state would become a perpetual occasion of sin, far from being an easy means of perfection and a harbour of salvation for those who sought shelter therein.

Nevertheless, frequently the violation of a point of rule implies some venial sin *indirectly* because of the disorderly motive provoking it. It will then be a sin of idleness, for example, of gluttony, sensuality, pride, curiosity, anger, etc., and not a sin of disobedience to rule.

But there are three circumstances in which disobedience would be a real sin, possibly even attaining the gravity of a mortal sin.

The *first* is where is added to disobedience *formal contempt* of the rule or of the legislator—a contempt directly opposed to the religious vows.

The *second*, which has already been mentioned, presupposes a deliberate resolve to observe the rule no longer and no longer to aim at perfection by it : this would also be directly opposed to the vows.

Lastly, the *third* case is that of a superior ordering something expressly in the name of holy obedience or—which amounts to the same thing—adding to the rule an ecclesiastical censure. It is manifest that in this case transgression would be directly opposed to the vow of obedience, and, therefore, a grave fault.

A *fourth* circumstance is conceivable, although it concerns only the superior and not his subjects. As it is on the former that the responsibility of the observance of the rule by the community lies, his negligence in allowing it to be broken on an important point such as silence, the enclosure, not entering the cell of another, forbidden reading, etc., could easily become a seriously culpable negligence, and a mortal sin. It would not be difficult to show how such negligence on the part of superiors in repressing abuses is opposed to the most elementary duties of their office : they incur the risk of tending to relax monastic life in a religious community and to ruin the house.[1]

[1] Potest prælatus regularis graviter peccare negligendo culpas veniales in subditis, imo et inobservantiam circa regulas, quæ tamen non obligant subditos ad peccatum etiam veniale ; quia in hâc ipsa negligentia prælatus defuit graviter obligationi qua ex munere suo tenetur consulere potissimum bono spirituali et profectui subditorum et observantiæ regulari, quæ per hujusmodi defectus toleratos maxime labefactatur (De Lugo, *De just. et jure*, Disp. 9, sec. 3, n° 21, t. VI, p. 23).

ARTICLE III

Necessity for the Secular Clergy[1]

In the hierarchy of the secular clergy three orders, *bishops*, *priests*, and *inferior clerics*, may be distinguished, and in respect to each order may be raised the question of their obligation to perfection.

But as these three orders are more or less full participations in the priesthood of the New Law, we may begin by a general thesis on the perfection requisite to the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

1. The following is the GENERAL THESIS unanimously supported by every Catholic theologian.

Whilst the religious profession is only a state of perfection *to be acquired*, the priesthood presupposes a perfection *already acquired*, at least to the degree requisite for the useful and worthy exercise of the various functions of the sacred Ministry. Religious only pledge themselves to aim at perfection; whereas a person who receives priestly consecration is already pledging himself to practise perfection. This entire difference between the religious and the priestly state can be summed up in two distinct notions: perfection to be acquired and perfection to be practised, *perfectio acquirenda, perfectio exercenda.* That is why S Jerome in his Epistle to Rusticus writes to him: "So live in your monastery that you may merit to become a priest and a cleric: *Sic vive in monasterio ut clericus esse merearis.*"[2] And S Thomas formulated the same thesis in the following words: "To receive holy orders, the possession of a greater interior holiness is required than for taking religious vows: " *Ad sacros ordines requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirat etiam religionis status.*[3] In order to deserve the

[1] See J.-J. Olier, *Traité des SS Ordres*; Tronson, *Examens particuliers*; Dubois, *Le saint prêtre*; Gibbons, *The Ambassador of Christ*; Manning, *The Eternal Priesthood*; Card. Mercier, *La Vie intérieure*; Mgr Lelong, *Le Prêtre.*

[2] *Epist. IV* ad Rusticum.

[3] 2a 2æ, Q. 184, a. 8. Cf. *Council of Trent*, Sess. XXII, de Reform., c. 1; *Leo XIII*, Encycl. *Quod multum* (12 August, 1886); (Sept. 8, 1899); *Pius X, Exhortatio ad clerum* (August 4, 1908); *Codex*, can. 124-7; *Imitation of Christ*, l. IV, ch. v.

priesthood, a person must already be a good religious, of tried virtue.

It would be easy to gather together the proofs of this fundamental thesis, but as they would greatly exceed the limits of this book, it must be considered sufficient if in brief outline the arguments from Holy Scripture, Tradition, and Reason be given.

A. If the SACRED SCRIPTURES be searched, it will be agreed that already under the Old Law a certain degree of legal holiness was incumbent on sacred ministers. "Be ye clean," said the Prophet, "you that carry the vessels of the Lord."[1]

And Leviticus had already said, of levites: "They shall be holy to their God, and shall not profane his Name; for they offer the burnt-offering of the Lord, and the bread of their God; and therefore they shall be holy."[2]

If this was true under the Old Law, which was but a shadow and a type, how much more literally is it true for those priests of the New Law to whom our Lord himself solemnly declares: "You are the light of the world; you are the salt of the earth." If this salt were to lose its savour, how could society be preserved? If their light were to be extinguished, how could it be trimmed?[3]

Our Lord said likewise to them, in one of the most solemn moments of his life: "I am the vine, you the branches," a figure no less affecting than realistic, in order to lead them to understand that all the life and holiness of the head must pass into the members, in order that they may continue worthy of it, living and fruitful as it is itself.

Speaking without any figure of speech or parable, the apostles have drawn a picture of the priest: His conduct must be beyond reproach; he must be prudent, chaste, adorned with virtues, enjoying a good reputation even among infidels, and capable of serving as a model to all the faithful by his words, his conversation, his charity, his faith, the purity of his doctrine, the integrity of his morals, the

[1] Mundamini qui fertis vasa Domini (Isa. lii, 11).

[2] Sancti erunt Deo suo, et non polluent nomen ejus; incensum enim Domini et panes Dei offerunt, et ideo sancti erunt (Levit. xxi, 6).

[3] Matt. v, 13-16. Vos estis sal terræ . . . Vos estis lux mundi . . . Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est.

gravity of his life; taking no part in the business of this world; solely a man of God and the perfect model of his flock.[1] In a word, he must be the living image of Christ, whom he represents to the faithful, *Pro Christo legatione fungimur* (2 Cor. v, 20) says S Paul, concluding from this the exhortation: *Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi* (1 Cor. iv, 16).

B. With so clear and so complete a description of the holiness required by our Lord in all his ministers, the teaching of CATHOLIC TRADITION with one accord voices the echo of the doctrine. All the Fathers of the Greek and Latin Church and all their great doctors could supply us with an unlimited number of texts to this effect.[2]

For the sake of brevity, let this decisive text of S Thomas suffice as a quotation: "For the proper fulfilment of the functions of holy orders, it is not sufficient to have ordinary sanctity: outstanding goodness is required, that those whom the sacrament of Orders has raised above the people may also be above them in their holiness."[3]

Whenever, down the course of the centuries, the clergy seemed to be losing their fervour and falling away from the ideal of sanctity imposed on them by their divine Founder, the voice of Councils was at once raised in protest, and aroused in the ranks of the clergy themselves militant bands of reformers, calling the priesthood back to the duties of its sacred mission.

Let us quote, as an example, the Council of Trent, in its celebrated chapter on Reform: "It is proper and absolutely necessary that clerics called to the Lord's heritage should so fashion their lives and morals that nothing in their ways, their actions, their bearing, their speech, and their whole per-

[1] Ut sit irreprehensibilis, prudens, ornatus, pudicus, bonum testimonium habens ab iis qui foris sunt; ut se præbeat exemplum fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in caritate, in fide, in doctrina, in integritate, in gravitate; ut non se implicet negotiis sæcularibus, sed sit perfectus homo Dei, atque forma gregis ex animo. S Paul, 1 Tim. iii, 2; iv, 12 et 15; 2 Tim. ii, 4, 22; iii, 17; Tit. ii, 7, 8; 1 Petr. v, 3.

[2] For these texts, see Raynaud, *Le Prêtre d'après les Pères.*

[3] Ad idoneam executionem Ordinis non sufficit bonitas qualiscumque, sed requiritur bonitas excellens; ut sicut qui Ordinem suscipiunt, super plebem constituuntur gradu Ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis (*Sum. Th.*, Suppl., Q. 35, a. 1, ad 3).

son should be seen, except that which bears the stamp of seriousness, moderation, and piety."[1]

C. Proofs from Reason are plentiful. For brevity's sake they may be reduced to these three:

1st, *The priest is the mediator between God and men,* for there is only one Priest, one Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, *unus mediator Dei et hominum* (1 Tim. ii, 5), of whom all other priests are but members or representatives, *Sacerdos alter Christus.*

No other mission, no religious profession, neither that of the Carthusians nor of the Trappists nor of the Jesuits, can raise a creature to so superhuman and incomparable a dignity. To prove himself really worthy of it, the priest must constantly keep before his eyes this lofty office. Since we are the members of Jesus Christ, the High Priest, not only should we not dare to prostitute those members, according to the strong words of S Paul: *Tollens ergo membra Christi, faciam membra meretricis?* (1 Cor. vi, 15); but even we must strive to honour them by exceeding holiness, for the honour or dishonour of the members reflects upon the head, and the honour or dishonour of the ministers of religion reflects upon religion itself.

This is fundamentally the same argument which our Lord set forth, after the Last Supper, to his disciples in the parable of the vine and the branches. Hence arises the obligation to live the life of Christ by assiduous imitation, as S Paul practised it, exacting from all his followers a noble emulation: *Imitatores mei estote sicut et ego Christi* (1 Cor. iv, 16) and therefore the priest must be, like our Lord, really holy, immaculate, without stain, separated from the company of sinners and raised to the very level of heaven: *Sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus et excelsior coelis factus* (Heb. vii, 26).

2nd. The priest, by his profession, is *vowed to virginity and to the ministry of public prayer*: herein lies the second motive for being truly holy. Without the habitual practice of the interior life and of holiness, the priest will not be able to remain pure and chaste, as experience has but too clearly

[1] Sic decet omnino clericos in sortem Domini vocatos, vitam moresque suos omnes componere, ut habitu, gestu, incessu, sermone aliisque omnibus rebus, nihil nisi grave, moderatum ac religione plenum præ se ferant (Sess. XXII, c. 1, De Reformat.).

proved. Assuredly he will fall, and perhaps grievously, becoming unworthy to exercise his functions as mediator between God and men, whether at the Altar, or in the administration of the sacraments and in every office of public prayer.

From unworthiness there will soon arise disgust at the sacred duties, and as the human heart cannot live in a complete void, if the heart of a priest is void of God, with what unclean love will it be filled? Unhappy man, who henceforth wanders outside his proper path, and finds no more peace here on earth.

3rd. Finally, the *ministry* which the priest must exercise among souls is at once the *most holy* and the *most dangerous*: a further motive why he should be exceedingly holy.

(*a*) It is a *most holy* ministry, since its mission is to sanctify souls by the sacraments, and also by word and example: reasons exacting a degree of holiness that is far from ordinary. It is impossible to avoid this conclusion, for if a person is a religious *for himself*, he is a priest *for others*, as S Paul says: *pro hominibus constituitur* (Heb. v, 1).

(*b*) It is also a *most dangerous* ministry, for it must cure the most infectious diseases without contracting the infection, and just as the sun's ray purifies mud without itself becoming tarnished, so must the priest, living with sacred things, not become familiarised with them; living in the world, he must not become worldly; living without the help of an exterior protective rule, he must continue regular and faithful to a voluntary discipline. Lastly—and this is not the least source of discouragement to him—he must remain devoted to souls in spite of the worst possible ingratitude and injustice.

In the face of these dangers, these duties, these responsibilities which at times prove overwhelming even for angelic strength—*onus angelicis humeris tremendum*—it will be easier to understand the truth of S Thomas's words quoted above: "The holiness that suffices for taking vows of religion is by no means sufficient for receiving holy orders."

It is a known fact that some priests, after some years of experience in the ministry, disconcerted by difficulties which they had not suspected—despite the repeated warnings of their directors which they thought to be exaggerated—draw back in terror at finding themselves unequal to such great responsibilities, and not being able any

longer to return to the secular state, which is perpetually closed to them, they decide to seek refuge and shelter in a religious order, in order to shelve their responsibility, and ensure their own salvation.

But if these unhappy priests have not the courage to enter religion, nor to persevere on the level of the sanctity of their vocation, what will become of them? This is God's secret, and also the secret of the confessors who conduct pastoral retreats.

It seems altogether superfluous to refute the trite objection: "Perfection is only for religious and monks: it wasn't made for us!" Consider the striking reply of the author of the *Imitation*, who was, nevertheless, a monk.

"Behold, thou hast become a priest. Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but now thou art more closely bound to the bonds of discipline, and obliged to a greater perfection of holiness. A priest should be adorned with every virtue, and afford example of a good life to others. His conversation should be with the angels in heaven, or with perfect men upon earth."[1]

2. The doctrine which we have just been propounding can be applied to the priesthood in general, but it is easy to define it still more precisely by applying it to each of the three orders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; bishops, ordinary priests, and inferior clerics, who all together constitute various parts participating in one and the same priesthood.

1st. BISHOPS are the head of the mystical body of Holy Church, and it is especially in them that holiness must abide in its plenitude, that it may pass from the head into all the members. Having the plenitude of the Priesthood, they must possess all its holiness. Such is the thesis which all theologians develop. For this reason they call the episcopal state a state of perfection *simpliciter* or without any reservation.

To quote Suarez: "Omnino asserendum est," he says, "episcopos ratione pastoralis muneris, esse in statu perfectionis, non tanquam in via ad illam, sed tanquam in

[1] Ecce sacerdos factus es . . . Non alleviasti onus tuum, sed arctiori jam alligatus es vinculo disciplinæ et ad majorem teneris perfectionem sanctitatis. Sacerdos omnibus virtutibus debet esse ornatus, et aliis bonæ vitæ exemplum præbere. Ejus conversatio cum angelis in cœlo, aut perfectis viris in terra. (Bk. iv, ch. v).

termino, qui proprie dicitur status perfectionis et perficientium. Ita docet S Thomas et consentit Gerson, nec aliquis scholasticorum dissentit." (*De statu relig.*, l. I, c. 15, n. 5.)

2nd. As regards PRIESTS, theologians have a slightly modified way of expressing themselves, allowing room for a distinction between the character of the priesthood itself, and its exercise in the ministry of souls. Indeed, theoretically, the priest, while being invested with the priestly character, could refrain from performing some of its functions, at least the most formidable, on account of the responsibility incurred, or perform them but seldom.

For instance, with the bishop's consent a priest could devote himself to other forms of work, such as teaching letters or science—and even, by becoming a religious, dispense himself entirely from the ministry of souls. Such a priest, not being necessarily pledged to the ministry of souls, is therefore not completely bound to the degree of sanctity and perfection demanded by the pastoral ministry.

This is what S Thomas implies when he says of the priest in general that he is not completely bound, by the single fact of his ordination, to the state of perfection. *Non ponitur simpliciter in statu perfectionis* (2a 2æ, Q. 184, a. 6). But obviously the distinction is much more theoretical than practical. An active priest not exercising any ministry is scarcely conceivable.

Moreover, such a priest will certainly celebrate mass each day, nor will he be dispensed from celibacy, nor from the duty of public prayer. Under this aspect, he will certainly be bound to the perfection presupposed by daily celebration of mass, the habitual state of perfect chastity, and lastly the ministry of public prayer. Even were he to perform no other duties, these are undoubtedly quite sufficient to oblige him to aim at a high state of holiness.

Thus, in whatever way, more or less rigorous, some theologians express themselves on the question of sacerdotal sanctity, they are all in agreement in recognising that the priesthood is a state of holiness somewhat below that of a bishop, but nevertheless far higher than any other state, even the religious state, and therefore that it demands greater perfection and holiness.

3rd. With regard to MINOR CLERICS, the question as to the degree of relative holiness demanded of them is not under discussion, since they all are intended eventually

to become priests. Therefore, for each of them, what is required is a real preparation, a noviciate of sacerdotal holiness. They must advance in perfection in the measure of their approach to the altar and the priesthood.

Concerning the virtues proper to each of these minor orders, useful reading will be found in the *Treatises on Holy Orders* which are put into the hands of all aspirants to the priesthood.[1] At this point it is unnecessary to be insistent : the theme is beyond our scope and we should wander outside the limits marked out for the present book.

[1] Gontier, *Explication du Pontifical* ; Bacuez, *Instruct. et Médit. à l'usage des ordinands.*

PART II

PART II

The Obstacles to be Overcome

AFTER having studied the *ultimate end* which we should aim at in directing our Christian life, we will study the *obstacles* which we must avoid on our way. We shall see later the *supernatural helps* which God keeps in reserve, and the *practical means* which we have to use to gain the end.

These OBSTACLES are of three kinds. We shall find them in ourselves, in our fellow men, and in the enemy of the human race—the devil.

In ourselves there is the triple concupiscence, the unfortunate result of original sin: *pride*, *sensuality*, and *love of riches*. Around us there are the scandals of the *world* which threaten to engulf us. There is, moreover, the *devil*, called by our Lord the Prince of this world.

Altogether, these are FIVE SUBJECTS to be studied, which will be preceded by two preliminary studies, one on *temptation* and the other on *concupiscence* in general: and we shall conclude with an important corollary on the *necessity of sacrifice* in acquiring the love of God.

CHAPTER I

Temptation

WE shall speak of the nature, degrees, usefulness and necessity of temptation, and lastly of our behaviour *before, during*, and *after* temptation, in accordance with the example set by our Lord.

I. General Outline.—Every attraction to evil is a temptation, and whether the call be from the inside or outside, whether the evil be positive or negative, whether it be something done or something left undone, is of small account. It is useless to argue about this notion which our intimate experience, alas, has made only too familiar to us. Let us speak only of what we have termed the *three degrees* of temptation, which have not always been explained clearly enough nor without confusion by a large number of spiritual writers.

Temptation enters by the three faculties of the soul—the intellect, the desires, and finally the will. The object suggested by the tempter must appeal first of all to the intellect, then to the involuntary cravings, and finally it must have the consent or the refusal of the free will.

It is clear, therefore, that to wish for something, one must know what the thing wished for is ; and that to wish for it although it may be morally bad, one must find some attraction in it. It is the more or less enticing allurements of this attraction which appeal to our free will and make it consent to evil.

But it is clearly seen through these three grades that it is neither the knowledge of the mind, nor the involuntary delight which may result from it in the sensible affections, which constitutes sin. Sin lies entirely with that third faculty, the will.

Now we must bring in a new factor, since the will is not always free. There are several natural obstacles which can check and even completely thwart free judgement at a given moment. Theologians have made a deep study of these obstacles, and divide them into four classes—*ignorance*,

passion, fear and *violence.* It is evident that actions voluntarily performed in ignorance of their prohibition or under the influence of concupiscence, in sleep, for example, or in mental derangement caused by fear which has overruled the mind, or, finally, under the influence of extraordinary violence—actions such as these are not freely sanctioned, and there can be no responsibility for them. In consequence of this, consent of the will to a bad action is only assumed if normal liberty has been given, and it is reckoned in proportion to the liberty enjoyed. A free action can be performed with a consent more or less complete, and it is in proportion blameworthy or excusable.[1] The exact measure of this guilt often escapes the notice of a man, who must leave the complete assessment to him who alone " knows the heart."

The object which can obtain our consent has a double nature. We may consent only to the interior delight already aroused by the temptation, without consenting to go further and commit the guilty action. The sin is then an interior sin, one of thought or desire. Or, we can wish to perform the action itself. Thus, in a temptation to revenge, I can take pleasure merely in the desire for revenge (sin of thought) or again in the actual deed of real revenge which I take. The sin of revenge is consummated in the second instance, but it is started in the first, and it is entirely by the free will that it becomes a sin.

It is not right, then, to say, as certain authors do, that the sin starts in the sensitive appetite experiencing pleasure, and finishes in the will. It could only be started in sensitive delight by the addition of the will, that is to say, by a willing consent which would even be sufficient to constitute a mortal sin.[2]

Need of these distinctions. We must carefully distinguish these different degrees of temptation in order to enlighten the faithful who are often in great need of it. Some timorous souls see sin in the spontaneous thought of wickedness, or in the pleasure and the involuntary attraction which this thought has evoked in spite of its rejection by the will; others, on the other hand, barely reproach themselves with

[1] For a fuller discussion of these four obstacles to complete liberty, see any treatise on Moral Theology.

[2] Cf. S Francis de Sales, *Introd.*, l. IV, c. iii.

sanctioning under a veiled pretext an interior pleasure, and are only alarmed at external actions.

The spiritual director must awaken the sleeping consciences of these latter, and reassure the exaggerated fears of the former; in a word, it is for him to train their consciences.

II. The Usefulness of Temptation.—The designs of divine Providence have ordered that all men, without exception, should be tempted, and even that their whole life should be one long series of conflicts and temptations: *militia est vita hominis super terram* (Job vii, 1): because temptation is trial, and trial is the necessary condition for gaining merit and reward: *non coronabitur nisi qui legitime certaverit* (2 Tim. ii, 5). Such is the law, perfectly justifiable.

If temptation is indispensable for all the elect, it is still more necessary for those chosen souls who aspire to a higher perfection either in the religious state or in the priesthood. From their first entry into the paths of higher perfection, the Holy Spirit has warned them of these temptations: *Fili accedens ad servitutem Dei, præpara animam tuam ad tentationem* (Eccli. ii, 1). It is just when our offering has been most agreeable to God, when we have felt nearest to him, that temptation has come to make further trial of us: *Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te* (Tob. xii, 13).

And S Paul gives us the reason: Our power is made perfect in our infirmity: *virtus in infirmitate perficitur* (2 Cor. xii, 9). It is in truth in the burning crucible of temptation that the soul thoroughly purifies itself from dross, that it expiates the past and completely frees itself from sensible attachment to the things of the world, in order to belong only to God, and to put all its trust in him alone.

It is in fighting against the assaults of temptation that we realise better our weakness, that we see our original misery, and that we understand more clearly our insignificance and great need of help from God; then our humility increases, and we grow proportionately in divine virtue: *cum infirmor, tunc potens sum* (2 Cor. xii, 10).

At the same time, in the heat of this conflict there is developed great energy and power of will. The will is strengthened, hardened, and prepared to resist other attacks even more violent. Finally, temptation is, like suffering, the crucible of divine love; love through it becomes purer,

more ardent, and, like the love of God and of souls, is the epitome of Christian perfection ; we may, therefore, conclude that temptation is the crucible of perfection, the mould of strong souls ; no soul is truly strong which has not known trial : *virtus in infirmitate perficitur* (2 Cor. xii, 29).

Let us go further and add that if the trial of temptation is necessary for all those who aspire to Christian perfection, it is especially necessary for those who are destined to become the directors of souls. And here is the reason : Why did our Lord wish to be tempted in the desert ? Was it for his own perfection ? Clearly not, it was not for himself ; it was for us. The apostle tells us expressly : *Debuit per omnia fratribus similari* (Heb. ii, 17). Not content with clothing himself in mortal flesh, the Word of God had assumed all its miseries and weaknesses—except sin and ignorance—in order that, instead of frightening souls by the brilliance of his grandeur and the appearance of his infinite majesty, he might win to himself the most timid and insignificant and gain their confidence. " I know well your weaknesses and your infirmities," he seems to say to us, " because I willed to make trial of them myself. Come to me with confidence, and I will comfort you " : *Venite ad me omnes et ego reficiam vos* (Matt. xi, 28).

And S Paul concludes : " Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace " (Heb. iv, 16). *Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ ut misericordiam consequamur et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno* (Heb. iv, 16). The reason is that our high priest knows how to compassionate all our weaknesses because he has made trial of them all—yet without sin. *Non habemus Pontificem qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris, tentatum autem per omnia, pro similitudine absque peccato* (Heb. iv, 15).

It is the same with the ministers of Christ, the directors of souls, and for the same reasons. And that is why S Paul tells us that they have been expressly chosen, not from angels, but from the children of men, in order that they may the better sympathise with their misfortunes. *Omnis namque Pontifex ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur, qui condolere possit iis qui ignorant et errant, quoniam et ipse circumdatus est infirmitate* (Heb. v, 1, 2).

Sinners, then, must find in their priests a heart full of goodness, and withal of fatherly tenderness ; *indutus viscera misericordia Dei* (Col. iii, 12)—a heart which, far from

rejecting them with the haughty disdain of the Pharisee or the excessive severity of the Jansenist, seeks on the contrary to understand their weakness, to show compassion, and to cure the sin by love of the sinner.

To this end a very efficacious means is to have experienced the same misfortunes oneself, and to have felt the need of the same compassion, the same tenderness, the same fatherly hand to help raise us up.

In truth we must wholly reject the sin which our divine Model never suffered—*tentatum per omnia absque peccato* (Heb. iv, 15)—sin which mars the beauty of the soul, which changes so markedly that virginal sensitiveness which renders the soul of a priest tender and sympathetic towards the ills of all poor sinners. Nor must we scornfully reject temptation itself, since it is so useful for our sanctification as well as for the welfare of souls. Such an exaggerated fear would arise from a secret laziness or from a feeling of cowardice. Like S Chrysostom, let us fear one thing only—sin; *unum timet Chrysostomus, peccatum.*

Let us not imitate those fainthearted souls who, having embraced the call to a perfect life, and, believing by an extraordinary delusion that they have found rest and escaped the field of battle, find themselves suddenly surprised and discouraged by the first temptation which assails them, and then make their lamentations before God and man.

"Ah, my dear souls!" the loving S Francis de Sales replies to them, "do you think that perfection consists of sweetness and spiritual comfort and that it is only necessary to sleep peaceably in the boat and land without any struggle in the haven of safety? Would you resemble those soldiers of a garrison who have all their happiness in times of peace in a comfortable town, who make good cheer, and become masters in the house of their hosts, and yet call themselves soldiers, and are valiant and courageous so long as they are never in battle or warfare? In truth our Lord does not need these soldiers in his army—he needs fighting men and conquerors: not cowards!"

Instead of wishing for a false peace which we shall never find anywhere in this life, let us learn to fight and prepare for the still more strenuous combats which will await us later. Our Lord himself teaches us this warfare and shows us by his example how to prepare for the fight and to conquer, as well as how to behave after victory.

III. Preparation for the Fight.—Our Lord in the desert, before his temptation, *watched* and *prayed*, even as he urged his apostles; *Vigilate et orate ne intretis in tentationem* (Mark xiv, 38). These two injunctions are equally valuable. *Watching* guards us against the surprises of the enemy; it shows us the danger as soon as it appears and makes us always ready for battle. Watching, above all, forewarns us of dangerous occasions of sin, and protects us from imprudence, which brings disaster in its train as the punishment of rashness.

Sufficient emphasis is not always placed on those things which should be classed as "imprudent." They include the "freedom" of promiscuous reading, and conversation, and the browsing in all branches of knowledge which obtains so greatly to-day in all questions affecting public morality, under the guise of liberty of the press or freedom of thought.

A great danger of the novels of the present day, together with the cinema, is that these things make for an intimacy with vice by means of a certain literary or poetic attractiveness. After becoming acquainted with evil through literature or poetry, one may be liable to practise it. Imitation is contagious, and in it is to be found the psychological explanation of a great part of the impulses and follies which we would never have yielded to without bad example in the first case.

In a literary or dramatic guise vice is transfigured, idealised even; by dangerous contact the sensitiveness of conscience by degrees becomes dulled; we become accustomed to living in an unreal world which is false and chimerical; and one moment of forgetfulness, or even of illusion, is sufficient to make us lose our balance, and to send us headlong into the dreaded abyss.

And what we say about literature and novels of questionable morality is equally applicable to rationalistic, antichristian literature. Our religious faith no less than our Christian morals may be mortally injured by an unhealthy curiosity, or at least may suffer harm which is perhaps irreparable. The remembrance of such impious blasphemy may ruin for ever the delicacy and simplicity of our faith and our piety.

In fine, the practical conclusion is that whenever we doubt the suitability of certain books we should do well to have

recourse to our confessor or director, who will always give us that advice which will prove most useful.

IV. During Temptation.—As soon as temptation comes let us check its force by an act of Faith, or, if possible, by some well-known word of Holy Scripture. *Scriptum est!* Such is my faith! I cannot act against the deep convictions of my conscience and my faith. On this shield of faith, as S Paul tells us, as on a shield of steel the sharpest arrows of the enemy are soon blunted or break in vain. *In omnibus sumentes scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi extinguere* (Eph. vi, 16).

This instruction of our Lord is very just and very profound, whether it is taken from a supernatural, or from a natural and purely psychological point of view.

From a supernatural point of view it is clear that, in making mentally an act of faith as soon as the temptation presents itself, we raise our thoughts and our hearts on high by a *sursum corda!* We turn towards God, towards our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, our Angel Guardian, and we make sure of their efficacious assistance. Grace comes from on high to the help of nature and brings the valuable assistance which nature needs.

Even from the natural and psychological point of view the precept of our Lord is perfect. Another idea is brought immediately to oppose the thought suggested by temptation, and its strength will gradually grow until it becomes stronger and more powerful than its rival. The temptation being completely effaced, according to the *law of contrast,* will be overcome. Just as the brilliance of a star which shines and fascinates the eyes at night, pales and becomes extinct on the rising of the sun or in the light of the more powerful moon, so temptation grows weak and is put to flight by the brightness of faith. For the choice of a new idea with which to combat the temptation three general rules may be given.

1. In the case of temptations against purity it is better, instead of fighting them directly, to divert one's thoughts and engage the mind actively in other matters. The same applies to sins due to excessive affection.

2. On the other hand, in temptations to pride, idleness, revenge, avarice . . . we ought to meet the temptation openly with contrary thoughts and ideas. The first allure-

ment is weakened by the appearance of other different allurements, and the first inclinations to act according to the temptation are overcome by contrary reasons. Thus, feelings of pride are conquered by feelings of humility, hatred by love, revenge by pardon, idleness by work, avarice by almsgiving, and the like. The soul is then like the two scales of a balance, and it is only necessary for us to put more weight on one side and thus bring down the other.

3. Finally, in the case of small temptations, indifference and contempt for the tempter are very often sufficient to drive him away. In these cases Fr. Le Doré, who knew how to combine successfully *humour* with the wisest counsels, used to tell his penitents to begin to sing, and to sing not pious canticles, but " profane " airs, such as " La Casquette du Père Bugeaud." " It would appear," added the witty priest, " that the devil does not like this music, and when he sees that he is not taken seriously he quickly vanishes."[1]

V. After Temptation.—There are three suppositions: either our victory is certain, or it is doubtful, or we have been beaten.

A. If we are conquerors we shall know that the " yoke of our Lord is sweet and his burden light," but in the midst of the spiritual consolations of victory and peace we must not let our hearts be deceived by foolish complacency or presumptuous assurance, because the tempter has only retreated for a time, and he will certainly return. *Diabolus recessit ab illo usque ad tempus* (Luke iv, 13). We must keep ever on our guard, full of humility yet still confident in God who has sustained us with his all-powerful hand, and who will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength.[2] We will begin, then, to prepare ourselves again by watchfulness and prayer, for new trials and new victories.

B. If our victories do not seem sure, and our soul is plunged in restless doubt, and is not able to tell whether it has failed or resisted successfully, theologians give us two rules of practical conduct which we can with safety follow.

[1] See *Introd. to The Devout Life*, pt. IV, ch. ix.

[2] Fidelis autem Deus est, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere (1 Cor. x, 13).

1. We must ask ourselves what is our usual conduct in this kind of temptation. If we are accustomed to resist it then we can conclude that we have won also this time. But if, on the other hand, we are in the habit of letting ourselves succumb, then we must presume that we have been beaten once again. The reason for our conclusion is very simple. According to the ordinary laws of psychology, an action performed habitually is always more or less unconscious ; but it is always a conscious action when it does not arise from habit. Therefore, doubt arising from the lack of sufficient consciousness is sufficient proof that we have acted according to our habits. We must judge this case as we would all habitual cases, *ex communiter contingentibus* : a satisfactory guidance for us in " forming our moral conscience."

2. But if the doubt persists and produces an incurable state of perplexity and scrupulosity, the only remedy is to be found in a blind obedience to our director. In this path of obedience we may be deceived but we cannot commit actual or " formal " sin. The way is perfectly sure : *Errare possum, peccare non possum* (S Teresa).

The director will do well to order a penitent well known to be scrupulous, who always doubts whether his will consented to sin or not, to remain in peace, *each time that he cannot assert that full consent was given.* Only the firmness of the director can obtain obedience from the penitent and consequently his recovery from this cruel malady of scrupulosity, provided it has been taken in the beginning and has not attained proportions which amount to a disease.

C. If we have been vanquished by temptation, far from being discouraged we ought to rise promptly with the thought that the faults themselves can be of use for the welfare of our souls. *Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum* (Rom. viii, 28).

The only condition is that we atone for the fault committed, by *contrition,* together with a *firm purpose* of *amendment,* and that we make *satisfaction* to the divine justice ; three necessary factors of penance of which we have spoken elsewhere.

CHAPTER II

Concupiscence in General[1]

LET us proceed from temptation to its causes in the spirit and method of philosophy. The first, or at least, the principal cause of temptation is concupiscence. We can even say that it is the only immediate cause of temptation, in this sense, that to tempt us, the world and the devil must begin by arousing our concupiscence, and assuring themselves of its assistance and complicity. It alone can directly attack our free will and cause it to yield.

Now concupiscence, in its most general sense, has been *defined* by Aristotle and S Thomas as a spontaneous craving after pleasurable good, *appetitus delectabilis*, or the attraction of pleasure, which in itself is not evil provided it is kept within limits and remains submissive to the law of God.

It is a *spontaneous* desire, an impulsive movement, *motus primo-primus*, as theologians say, which precedes reason and liberty and is in itself neither good nor bad.

It is a desire or a longing for a *pleasing object* or for pleasure, and by this general word *pleasure* we must understand every kind of pleasure, spiritual as well as sensitive. The latter we share with animals, and they are to be found in every "sensible" organ of the body; the former are peculiar to rational beings, they belong to man's spiritual being, although their reaction and echo may be felt by the organic and "sensible" part as with all other spiritual operations.

This love of delight, or this need for pleasure, is the mainspring of all the motions of our being, whether of the spiritual soul or the physiological body, and *a fortiori* of those more violent motions which psychologists call passions in a wide sense, without indicating anything as to their moral character either good or bad.

The reader, if he is at all acquainted with psychology, knows the old classification of passions by the ancients,

[1] Bossuet, *Traité de la concupiscence.*

who divided them into eleven, six of which belong to the *appetitus concupiscibilis : love, hatred, attraction, repugnance, delight* and *sadness* : while five belong to the *appetitus irascibilis : hope, despair, daring, fear* and lastly, *anger*. He knows, too, that all these passions spring from "love" as from a common source. "Take away love," cried Bossuet, "and there are no more passions ; instil it, and you cause them all to spring up."[1]

Whatever truth there may be in this classification, love of pleasurable good is certainly the great mainspring of all life, and hence it is a gift of God, like life itself. It is instinct, or one's natural bent, which turns each of our faculties to the object which is its special delight, in order to hold and enjoy it according to the natural laws of reason. Unfortunately, THIS GIFT OF NATURE has been VITIATED by original sin ; the love of pleasurable good, instead of being governed by the laws of what is good and just, has broken through these restraints. Love which was well controlled and noble has become selfish and strives unceasingly to break away from all government and guidance. Thus it is that the words concupiscence, passion, and even love, sometimes have been given a bad meaning in the language of moralists which they would not have in the language of psychology, or in a hypothetical state of pure nature. In future, these words, concupiscence and passion, express the tending of our depraved nature towards a detestable selfishness, whereas in Christian language pure and disinterested love will mean by contrast the ideal of a new and perfect life.

To convince ourselves completely of this fact, we must remember that the constant teaching of the sermons of our Lord concerns renunciation of self, *abneget semetipsum* (Matt. xvi, 24). And all the Epistles of S Paul, and those of the other writers of the New Testament, wage an unending war against egoism and concupiscence under all its various forms.

"They that are Christ's," says S Paul, "have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." "Mortify therefore your members and their evil concupiscence," he adds to the Colossians.[2]

[1] Bossuet, *Connaissance de Dieu*, c. i, n. 6.

[2] Qui sunt Christi, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis (Galat. v, 24) ; Mortificate ergo membra vestra . . . concupiscentiam malam (Coloss. iii, 5).

S James points to concupiscence as the origin of sin and returns again and again to this main point: "From whence are wars and contentions among you? Are they not hence, from your concupiscence?"[1]

And S Peter continues: "Flying the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world."[2]

Such is the SAD STATE OF FALLEN MAN. Through concupiscence, which comes to him at his birth, the original equilibrium of his faculties is upset. Certainly this concupiscence is not the same in all natures, and experience shows striking contrast between the very good and the very bad. But no one completely escapes—save only the Blessed Virgin, whose conception was immaculate—and each one ought to remember humbly that he was "conceived in sin," and that by his natural weakness he is inclined to let himself yield to the evil which he condemns, and to turn away from the good of which he approves, as in the confession of S Paul himself: *Non enim quod volo bonum, hoc facio, sed quod nolo malum hoc ago* (Rom. vii, 19).

This *double character* of concupiscence needs to be emphasised. It is not only a ready inclination to evil, it is an obstacle to good, and the saddest part is that it turns us away from spiritual advantages which would have been effectual remedies against evil. For example selfishness, while making us shrink from the least inconvenience, fills our hearts with distaste for spiritual things, such as exercises of piety, and causes us to find great difficulty in them, even when, with a little good-will, they would be so easy and would be an invaluable remedy to cure us or preserve us from sin.

We see, therefore, how harmful is the evil of concupiscence, since it counteracts the remedies, and how right the ascetic authors are in fighting against it as against the most dangerous enemy of the life of our souls.

This combat ought to begin at the very outset of the purgative way: it is then that the effort is the most intense and the most arduous, but it should be prolonged even further, although to a less troublesome degree. It ought to

[1] Unusquisque tentatur a concupiscentia sua abstractus et illectus (Jas. i, 14); Unde bella et lites in vobis? Nonne hinc ex concupiscentiis (Jas. iv, 1). Concupiscentia cum conceperit, parit peccatum (i, 15).

[2] Fugientes ejus quæ in mundo est concupiscentiæ corruptionem (2 Pet. i, 4).

last, one might say, all one's life, because right up till the last breath our enemy is never dead, and his outbreaks and surprises are always to be feared. Concupiscence is in truth the *primum vivens* and the *ultimum moriens* in man, and just as among our bodily organs the heart is the first to have life and the last to die, so the ancients, by an ingenious comparison, were not wrong in making the heart the seat and organ of concupiscence.

After these general remarks on concupiscence we must now give the reader the DIVISIONS OF THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT. Concupiscence, or an inordinate love of pleasure, can take a double form, according as it points to the egoistical pleasures of the mind or those of the senses: *pride and sensuality*. The first is the revolt of the human mind against the mind of God, seeking to take his place; the second is the revolt of the flesh against the mind which it would dethrone. But just as pride and sensuality find their chief support in riches which allows them to procure everything here on earth, so these two affections often end in giving rise to a third: *the unbridled love of riches* which the soul, by a strange bent, ends in loving for themselves and as an end, although they were originally only a means.

We must now describe the three general forms of concupiscence and, after emphasising their nature and importance, point out the *remedies*.

CHAPTER III

Pride: Concupiscence of the Mind

THIS is a large subject, but we will limit it to three aspects: a general *outline* of pride, its *evil* and its *remedies.*

ARTICLE I

General Outline of Pride

To give a precise idea of pride we must study the word itself, and then what the word stands for. Its Latin ETYMOLOGY, *superbia,* shows well its pretension of unjustly wishing to raise itself *above* truth, above others, in fact above everything, because there is no limit to such pretensions, and the first man was tempted by the thought which had previously cast the devils down to hell: *you shall be as gods.*[1] The Greek etymology of this word ὑπερηφανία expresses exactly the same meaning, that of wishing to shine or appear above its true rank and above others.

General Outline.—Pride can be defined as *an inordinate love of our own excellence which leads us to raise ourselves above others and even to despise them.*

There is then in pride a double movement, the first with regard to ourselves, the second with regard to others. Let us study these in turn.

With regard to ourselves this self-love can be inordinate in two ways:

1. We assume full rights—often even exaggerating them—over the powers of the soul or of the body, of nature or of grace, whereas they have only been entrusted or lent to us by God;—or perhaps we credit ourselves with personal merit which we owe rather to the grace of God, since without this help we can do nothing—absolutely nothing. *Sine me nihil potestis facere* (Jo. xv, 5).

[1] Eritis sicut Dii, scientes bonum et malum (Gen. iii, 5).

This licence—which is contrary both to truth and justice, since it aims at making us independent of God in rejecting his sovereign control—is a sin of *complete* pride.

2. *Imperfect* pride or vanity—while recognising God as the author and ultimate source of all our gifts both natural and supernatural as well as our merits—exaggerates them in our eyes, even assigning to ourselves imaginary qualities or advantages, or boasting of real qualities which do not deserve such praise. Such pride is then an extraordinary conceit of ourselves. It drives us to expect to an unlimited degree the esteem of others, their approbation and their praise : it is *vainglory*, to boast of our success and to speak of ourselves : it is *bragging*, to attract attention to ourselves by ostentation and display : it is *mere show*, to ape the outward appearance of virtue without troubling to possess it : it is *hypocrisy*, the most contemptible of all the innumerable forms of vanity ; finally, and this is the most usual failing, it is an *unwillingness* to recognise how many good qualities we still lack : it is a *blindness* with regard to ourselves, most difficult to overcome in a soul beset with pride.

With regard to others, pride, whether perfect or imperfect, cannot fail to have as a consequence a certain amount of contempt, which is contrary both to justice and charity. " Pride," M. Ribet says, very forcibly, " tends to make a person prefer himself to others, and this preference brings with it contempt for others. When our superiority meets with a check it breaks out into jealousy, hatred, slander, calumny, rash judgements—in fact, into everything that may belittle others and exalt our own excellence. Such pride has an inordinate desire to appear, to make a show, to attract attention, esteem and praise : it has a dislike of passing by unnoticed, and above all, a horror of being despised. From this spring the plague of human respect, and the mean actions performed to gain a good reputation. The harshest form of pride lies in the desire to dominate others. Jealousy is its usual companion, a torment in seeing the good and profit of other people." As a result, by a just retribution, the proud become insupportable to themselves and to others.

This *description* will complete the bare definition which we gave of pride, showing by the side of its main elements the *chance* features which usually accompany it, or are

often to be found with it. It will thus help us to understand still better the grave harm and the unlimited evil of this first kind of concupiscence.

ARTICLE II

The Evil of Pride

Pride has a particular character of evil which comes not only from its own essence, which is a sin against truth, but from its numerous ill effects, because it is the greatest obstacle to a Christian life and the secret and poisonous source of all the vices which afflict mankind.

I.—*Pride is a* SIN AGAINST TRUTH. The sceptical question of Pilate to our Lord: "What is truth?" has long been answered for us. Truth is that God is the Creator of heaven and earth; he created us, we did not create ourselves, and we are incapable of adding one minute to our existence, or one inch to our stature. *Ipse fecit nos et non ipsi nos* (Ps. xcix, 3). But if God has given us all that we have and all that we are, we are entirely dependent on him, needy creatures, and we must live unceasingly under his protection, instead of striving for a false independence against which our conscience protests. To him alone then be all honour and glory: *soli Deo honor et gloria* (1 Tim. i, 17).

Such is Truth, shining like the light of day. Those who deny it blaspheme and cannot be excused, says S Paul: *inexcusabiles sunt* (Rom. i, 20). That man is inexcusable who, intoxicated with the idea of independence, considers himself to be God, acts like him, and robs him of his glory. He follows the revolt of Lucifer: *non serviam!* This foolish proud revolt against God is in truth a sin against light. It is also a sin against the Holy Ghost and difficult to pardon because God holds it in particular abhorrence. *Odibilis coram Deo et hominibus superbia* (Eccli. x, 7). God showed this in his swift punishment of the pride of Lucifer and his evil angels, by hurling them immediately into the depths of hell, making them pass in a moment from extreme happiness to extreme misery.

Vainglory is also a sin against truth, because, as Bossuet remarks, "if praise is false or unjust, what a mistake it is on my part to be so delighted with it. And if it is true,

whence comes the additional mistake of being less delighted with truth than with the testimony men give it ?"[1] What a mistake to pay more regard to the esteem of men than to virtue itself! Such a grave sin cannot fail to bring with it most dire consequences.

II.—*Pride is the* GREATEST OBSTACLE *to the Christian Life*, and consequently to the perfect life. We must bring together in full light, and place side by side the main points of the perfect life and the life of pride, in order to see immediately the radical difference between them.

Christian perfection, as we have seen, is the love of God developed to the point of self-effacement. Pride, on the other hand, is love of self and of one's own perfections developed to the point of neglect of God, who is the Creator and Master of all that we have and are. A truly humble Christian only seeks in everything and everywhere, the greater glory of God : but the man of pride seeks above all his own glory, forgetting that of God or even taking it for his own enhancement.

Whereas perfect charity makes us love our brothers through the love of God our common Father, so that we consecrate our services to them, forgetting and even sacrificing ourselves ; pride drives us to dominate and despise them, that is to say, to make use of them as we would a footstool, to elevate us and make us admired. The true Christian lives to serve others, but the man of pride to be served himself. The true Christian delights in extolling God in all his conduct and in living dependent upon God ; the man of pride, however, only wishes to extol himself and to be independent of every legitimate authority : he wants neither God nor Master.

We could not imagine a more direct contrast between two ideas of life, nor a more complete change in the natural relations between God and Man. They are the two extremes of the ideas and aspects of life. Is not S Augustine right in choosing these two opposing "loves" as the typical characteristics of two hostile cities which are opposed one to the other—the city of good and the city of evil ; the heavenly city and the worldly city ; the city of saints and the city of reprobates ? *Fecit itaque civitates duas amores duo : terrenam scilicet, amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei ;*

[1] Bossuet, *De la concupiscence*, ch. xvii.

cœlestem vero amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui.[1] It is impossible to serve at the same time two masters so different: and before we enter on the Christian and perfect life, we must make the choice of being a citizen of the city of evil or of the city of good: of the city of the holy angels or of the city of demons.

III.—*Pride is the* HIDDEN SOURCE OF ALL SINS: The Holy Ghost himself tells us that *Initium omnis peccati est superbia* (Eccli. x, 15). And daily experience shows us that this aphorism is by no means paradoxical: pride prepares us for every vice and accompanies every sin.

Take the case of a heretic who is separated from the Church—the unfortunate man has lost his faith. Look closer, and you will see that before he lost his faith he lost his humility. Pride and the worship of his own intellect hurled him into the abyss of heresy.

Take the case of an enraged man, mad with anger, who pours out blasphemies and curses. This man had not enough humility to endure a slight check, a contradiction, a hurtful word. It is pride again that has called forth this outburst of anger.

Or again, the case of an impenitent man who dies, keen in the desire for revenge, without wishing to forgive those who have wronged him. A little humility would have brought about a speedy reconciliation. Pride again has caused this unhappiness.

The thief, the assassin, the anarchist are all rebels, men of pride, whom pride leads to take part in criminal anti-social enterprises.

But it may be urged: Surely sins against the sixth commandment can boast of no connection with pride and of having nothing in common with this sin? That is only the outward appearance, and if one looks closer it will be seen that vanity at least is always joined to these offences. Sometimes vanity is the cloak of unspeakable crimes, sometimes it evokes and encourages them by clothing them with its brilliant cloak, sometimes—and the case is far from rare—sins of impurity are the punishment of pride. As S Augustine says: "He who raises himself and makes his mind revolt will be punished in the flesh." That is his usual punishment.

[1] *Civ. Dei*, l. XIV, c. xxviii.

Thus, the greater number of other vices have always, or almost always, pride as their first incentive or companion. *Initium omnis peccati superbia.* (Eccli. x, 15). While pride is a positive revolt, all the other sins are hidden revolts. All lead to revolt as their end.

Moreover, this end is usually *hidden*, and it is this which makes it most treacherous and dangerous. Vices which are clearly hateful catch our attention and are shunned; but hidden vices, especially when they pretend, like pride, to be something else, undermine our souls.

A theft, an obvious injustice, a violent fit of temper without any good reason, calumny or grave slander, a definite sin of impurity, cannot leave us indifferent. But there are many thoughts, words and actions influenced by pride which, although they do not overstep the bounds of venial sin, and are far from arousing our natural aversion, are yet within us habitually without raising doubt or alarm.

Nothing then is more dangerous. It would be better a thousand times to war against a declared enemy whom we dislike, than a secret enemy who flatters us and ruins us by that very flattery. We cannot guard sufficiently against a snare which has such an alluring appearance that the evil of it may easily pass unnoticed.

ARTICLE III

The Cure of Pride

We need a remedy for the MIND and also for the WILL.

Since pride is, above all, an illusion or an error of the mind and also a sin against Truth, the first remedy is to set right and reform our mental judgements by *knowing ourselves and knowing God.* The old pagans themselves tried to start a moral reform by a timely knowledge of self: γνῶθι σεαύτον: and S Augustine echoed their sentiments when he asked God for the grace to know Him and to know himself. *Noverim te, noverim me!* It is only after the reformation of the mind, and of its false judgements, that the reformation of the will is effected, which should, in its turn, be forced to agree with the new light of reason and of faith, and also with all the practical consequences which they include. This will be the second remedy.

1. Let us speak of the FIRST REMEDY: THE REFORMING OF THE JUDGEMENTS which we pass upon ourselves to justify or to excuse the love of our own perfections.

It is a great mistake to believe that Christian humility has as its foundation a pious illusion which will lead us to make a false estimate of ourselves, to be blind to the gifts which we have received from God, to hide from ourselves and others the talents or virtues which we possess, to believe ourselves worse than we really are. On the contrary, such a delusion would not be a virtue. We should not overestimate the gifts of God, and yet at times we must have them in evidence for the edification of others. Our Lord gives us direct instructions on this point: *Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in cœlis est* (Matt. v, 16). And consequently this is a command both natural and divine, to guard our good name and honour. *Curam habe de bono nomine* (Eccli. xli, 15).

There is then a reasonable love of our own good qualities, a love which is not only allowed but commanded, as befitting our dignity as men, as Christians, as priests, and as servants of Jesus Christ. There is in consequence a moderate and reasonable title to respect, consideration, and public opinion. It is only, as S Paul tells us, a question of moderation: *Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem* (Rom. xii, 3).

We hold that, although Christian humility is based on truth and teaches us to be humble, it assigns us our true place by a strictly accurate and exact knowledge of ourselves. S Bernard points out the same to us: *Humilitas*, he says, *est virtus qua homo verissima sui cognitione sibimetipsi vilescit.* In truth if we know well what we are and what we can do, far from having a vain conceit of ourselves we shall humble ourselves truly before God.

What, then, are we? What can we do by ourselves? *Quis es; quid dicis de te ipso?* (Jo. i, 22). It is necessary to ask ourselves from time to time these questions very seriously and very candidly, although it may not be agreeable to our pride, and it is necessary to bring before our eyes the sad picture of our fall, of our original nothingness, and of our own misfortunes which we forget too easily. As a good merchant, in calculating his fortune, begins by subtracting his debts and liabilities, so in calculating our value let us begin

by putting on one side what God has lent us and what belongs to him of which we must give an account, and on the other side let us put what really belongs to us. Let us faithfully make up God's account and then our own; we can thus easily lay our finger on our nothingness and on our great need.

It is indeed true—and faith teaches us—that in the supernatural order our souls and even our bodies are sanctified and enriched by the sacraments, the most precious gifts of grace. Our souls have by their likeness become capable of sharing in the nature and life of God himself: *Divinæ consortes naturæ* (2 Petr. i, 4). The soul is the temple of God; S Paul tells us over and over again: *Nescitis quia templum Dei estis? . . . Templum Dei sanctum est quod estis vos* (1 Cor. iii, 16, 17). One day it will see God face to face and will love him as he loves himself in eternal beatitude. Our bodies themselves in virtue of this sacred partnership carry the seed of immortality.

But whence come all these gifts? From nature? Clearly not. It is solely due to the divine goodness that we have them by the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. All these gifts are freely given: all this supernatural being is, as it were, lent to us: in giving them to us God has not given up entirely his rights as owner and sovereign Master.

It is then to God and to his account that we must enter all these supernatural treasures which we possess through his liberality: our titles of Christian, child of God, brother of Jesus Christ and member of Holy Church, Levite or priest, all the supernatural qualities or virtues theological and moral, the seeds of which have been implanted in our souls by Baptism and the sacraments.

Thus the beautiful jewels of our supernatural crown are enumerated one by one and found to belong to God.

But at least our natural faculties, our intellect, our will, our feelings, our heart, our imagination, all the talents of which our souls are at times so proud, should not these be taken from the account of God to be put down as our own property?

No, these riches are again only borrowed riches of which we shall have to render account, and of which we are not masters. God, who lent them to us willingly, can take them back at any moment. At any moment a sudden paralysis of the brain may take away from the greatest scholar or

the most original genius all his knowledge, his power, his memory, and reduce him to aberration and folly: it may make him lower than the irrational animals who at least have natural instinct as a sure guide.

These talents, of which we venture to be so proud, have been lent to us on condition that we use them for the glory of him who has entrusted them to us, without any misappropriation: *Soli Deo omnis honor et gloria* (1 Tim. i, 17). He will exact from us one day a rigorous account, for he is jealous of his glory, says Holy Scripture, and will not have it usurped: *Gloriam meam alteri non dabo.* (Isa. xlii, 8).

What a terrible responsibility exists for those who reflect a little; the custody of these talents, instead of making us joyful and filling us with pride, ought to make us tremble through the fear of letting them lie idle or of misusing them in secret pleasure. The more we have received the more severe will the divine Judge be, as he himself has said: *Cui multum datum est, multum quæretur ab eo* (Luke xii, 48).

Our faculties, our talents, do not then belong to us entirely; and our soul itself—that spiritual substance in which we resemble the angels and the Holy Trinity—belongs to thee, O God, who hast imprinted on them thy image and likeness like the personal signature of an author and a mark of ownership. It belongs to thee, then, it came from thee, and it is right that it should return to thee.

As for our bodies, little worthy though they be of attention, we must recognise another hand than ours moulding the elements which compose them. Another power than ours has set in motion the beatings of our hearts; another will keeps us above the abyss of nothingness. The Finger of God is still there: *Ipse fecit nos et non ipsi nos* (Ps. xcix, 3). But if all our being, both material and spiritual, natural and supernatural, is only borrowed, how can we glory in it as if we were the masters of it? *Quid habes quod non accepisti? Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis?* (1 Cor. iv, 7). What would we think of the banker who obstinately wished to put down to his own account the money lent him, instead of entering it to the account of his creditor? Would not his ruin be certain? Or what would we think of a poor proud man, who wished a coat to be considered as his which had been lent to him for one day, and which would have to be returned the

next day? Would his conduct not be ridiculous or foolish? What then remains to us as our own? Nothing remains but the worthlessness of our own origin to be the subject of any esteem or honour.

But I am wrong; there is one thing which is indeed ours and ours alone. It is our sins. They are our sole claim to glory.

God is the author of all good. But he is not the author of evil or of sin. If he permits our material actions, he does not cause their malice; his pure hands cannot touch iniquity: *Non Deus volens iniquitatem tu es* (Ps. v, 5). Thus sin—than which there is nothing more perverse or more evil in the world—is indeed our work, and our exclusive property. As a result, we are worth less than nothing, since the sinner is a rebellious cypher and doubly contemptible—*Nihilum rebelle in Deum armatum.* Such is the part which belongs to us.

But if we must attribute to ourselves alone the evil that we do, why not add also the good that we do? Because without the help of efficacious grace we could not perform one meritorious action: *Sine me nihil potestis facere* (Jo. xv, 5). Goodwill, co-operation with grace is itself a grace: *Deus operatur in nobis velle et perficere* (Philip. ii, 13). In fine, the share of our good works which belongs to us is so insignificant that the greatest doctors of the Church have not yet succeeded in explaining it clearly, and the sacred Liturgy does not hesitate to put on our lips this wonderful avowal: *Deus qui coronando merita, coronas dona tua.*

Whatever it may be, let us take away from our alleged treasure of personal merits the enormous debts contracted by our sins, and let us see with grief what our fortune has become, or rather, how great is our spiritual misfortune!

But if sin plunges us into debt and ruin, the state of destitution to which it reduces us is yet another reason for shame and humility. After the original fall which has been intensified by our sins, all our faculties are tainted and more or less vitiated. Our bodies have become subject to a thousand painful and humiliating maladies, which end in the corruption of the grave. And what is still more sad, they have become subject to the excesses of concupiscence: *Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius?* (Rom. vii, 24).

Our intellects have become incapable of understanding by

themselves, and without the guidance of Revelation, all the truths necessary for living and dying well. And even with the help of Revelation, what ignorance there is, what errors and exaggeration, from which men of great genius have not always escaped! We know so little of things, we know them so imperfectly, and we forget them so quickly. The more we know the more we are astonished at the smallness and poverty of our knowledge.

Our hearts are born self-centred, and we must use unceasing violence to raise them out of themselves towards that which is noble and generous, and to help them live habitually in the love of God, in pious and zealous practices of which, alas! they become so easily tired.

Our wills, which of themselves and without the help of grace become powerless to perform any meritorious action, are, on the contrary, capable of every evil: *carnalis sum, venumdatus sub peccato* (Rom. vii, 14). For there is not, says S Augustine, one sin committed by a man which another is not capable of committing unless restrained by God.

Thus, to whatever side we turn, we find no reasonable motive for glorifying ourselves or raising ourselves above others—a painful truth to hear, but one of incontrovertible proof, which we cannot deny if we are sincere.

How often when we reflect on ourselves do we realise our unfortunate condition, and feel in truth that we have little strength for anything; that we are poor, and bounded by our limitations; that the talents or powers that we have are in reality worth very little attention; that the most intelligent are not, after all, those who are the most widely read; that the clearest result of science is but to state the definite limits of our knowledge, and give a glimpse of the infinite extent of divine knowledge and our own ignorance. Often, in these hours of truthful reflection, have we not been astonished and saddened to see that others had too much esteem for us—saddened to see that their esteem was given to us instead of to God, by an unjust and sinful exchange which should call down the anger of God on their heads and on our own? Thus our conscience, as well as our reason and our faith, proves to us by many good reasons that we ought to be humble.

II. The Reformation of the Will ought to follow that of the mind. But how shall we mould it that we may become

humble and grow in this virtue? It can only be done by repeating acts according to a definite method. First we must exercise ourselves in the practice of negative humility; then positive and more perfect humility.

Negative humility has three degrees.

1st. Not to attribute to ourselves, or allow others to attribute to us, qualities which we do not possess. There is in that a lie and a fraud which every honest conscience rejects. If we had to give an example, we could give that of S John the Baptist. When the crowd tried to take him for the Messiah he hastened to undeceive them, and replied to the messengers from the Sanhedrim that he was not the Christ: *Confessus est et non negavit . . . quia non sum ego Christus* (Jo. i, 20).

2nd. Not to envy the talents and success of others, even when they seem to rival ours and to dim our own reputation; to take pleasure, on the contrary, in making our rivals known, to speak of them with esteem, to point them out for public notice after the example of S John Baptist: *Medius vestrum stetit quem vos nescitis . . cujus ego non sum dignus ut solvam ejus corrigiam calceamenti . . . Ecce agnus Dei. . .* (Jo. i, 26, 27, 29).

3rd. Not to look for praise, not to attract men's attention to our qualities and powers. Rather to take care not to bring them into evidence, except through the compulsion of some duty. Thus, when S John the Baptist was asked: *Elias es tu? Propheta es tu?* (Jo. i, 21) he answered: *Non sum.* It is not for me, he seems to say, to pass judgement on myself or award praise to myself. *Non enim qui seipsum commendat ille probatus est, sed quem Deus commendat* (2 Cor. x, 18). It is foolish to praise oneself. To God alone belongs the right of saying that John the Baptist is a prophet; more than a prophet, a new Elias, and that none of the sons of men has equalled him in the dignity of his vocation and the brilliance of his sanctity.

Positive humility, which is more perfect, consists less in outward acts and demonstrations than in the dispositions of the will and the sentiments of the heart. Thus it can be practised in every state and circumstance of life. It also has THREE DEGREES.

1st. This consists in a deep conviction of our own nothingness and misery, which leads us to recognise frankly in our innermost heart that we deserve neither the esteem nor the

regard of our fellows, but rather humiliation and neglect. Consequently, let us delight in humbling ourselves in our hearts before God, making ourselves of no account in his presence in order to glorify him by this homage. What unspeakable consolation to feel that God is everything in us, and that we are nothing; to refuse in spirit to be anything, in order that God may be all in all: *Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus* (1 Cor. xv, 28). This thought overwhelmed the saints, who loved to humble themselves and to lose themselves in the thought of their nothingness and misery, and to say again with S John Baptist: *oportet illum crescere, me autem minui* (Jo. iii, 30).

2nd. To endure with tranquillity the crosses which come to us. For example, if we are guilty of any awkwardness or clumsiness, to resist the first display of wounded self-love. Far from being annoyed or irritated with the mistake, rather to be surprised that we have not made more mistakes. And then, even when God spares us these trials, to keep ourselves free from desires, in the midst of honours and slights, authority and subjection, riches and poverty. . . .

3rd. The third degree is the most sublime: to expiate our sins, but, above all, to imitate Christ more closely, and to make ourselves like to him; to prefer insults with Jesus, who was overwhelmed with insults, rather than honours; to prefer poverty with Jesus, rather than riches; to wish to be regarded as useless and incapable through love of Jesus Christ, who was the first to wish to pass as such, rather than to be considered wise and important in the eyes of men. The saints have extended this to the point of what our wisdom calls folly. Yes; but it is the folly of love. S Paul has given us the word: let us use it after him with respect for those souls who are sublime in their humility: *Nos stulti propter Christum; tamquam purgamenta huius mundi facti sumus* (1 Cor. iv, 10, 13). S John of the Cross asked as his reward from our Lord to suffer and to be despised for him: *Pati et contemni pro te;* S John of God wished to be considered a fool and to be treated as such; S Francis of Assisi asked in his will that he should be buried in the ground reserved for criminals. And there are numberless other instances. And when we hear these heroic deeds quoted, instead of being tempted to smile, let us humble ourselves since we are of the number of those who do not know how to understand and admire them as much

as we ought: *Judæis quidem scandalum, gentibus autem stultitiam . . . pereuntibus stultitia est; iis autem qui salvi fiunt, id est nobis, Dei virtus est* (1 Cor. i, 18, 23).

Lastly, the great means of growing in humility is to have recourse frequently to prayer: *Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum* (Cant. viii, 6)—*Jesu mitis et humilis corde, fac cor meum secundum cor tuum*!

CHAPTER IV

Concupiscence of the Senses or Sensuality

THE SECOND KIND of concupiscence is that of the senses, which Holy Scripture in its vigorous language has called the *concupiscence of the* FLESH, *concupiscentia carnis* (1 Jo. ii, 16; Galat. v, 17). After the revolt of the mind against God by pride comes the revolt of the body against the mind—a just punishment of man's pride.

Undoubtedly, it is still the soul which leads this new revolt, through its inordinate desire for pleasure in the senses. But it is the inferior part of the soul, in that it is united to a material body, like animals which have no reason. Pride has been able to tempt ethereal spirits. Lucifer and his rebellious angels are a proof of this. Sensuality on the other hand can only affect souls which are joined to bodies with feeling and material organs. Although we can say that pride is the sin of angels while sensuality is that of animals, we mean the human animal, which S Paul calls *animalis homo* (1 Cor. ii, 14) because animals without reason have at least an instinct to guide them and are not weakened by vice. Man, then, through the slavery of sensuality, degrades himself and falls lower than the animals.

We shall study the *nature* of fleshly concupiscence, and its terrible *effects* on the soul; we shall then point out its *remedies*, especially *mortification*.

ARTICLE I

Its Nature

All the senses of man, both external and internal, are subject to concupiscence. They are all—to use the expression of Holy Scripture—like so many WINDOWS by which the enemy can penetrate into the fortress of our soul to bring death: *Ascendit mors per fenestras nostras* (Jerem. ix, 21).

The eyes can allow themselves to be fascinated by the allurements of the beauty of the body and by worthless and immoral sights. The ears can bring us voluptuous strains or lascivious words. The mouth and the palate delight in the pleasure of eating and drinking; the sense of smell can weaken the soul by scents and intoxicating perfumes which are often lures of pleasure; but it is above all in the sense of touch that the pleasure lies from which spring the most heated passions of man, of which we cannot speak without blushing. The *animalis homo* of which S Paul spoke is centred chiefly in this sense of touch, for though all the passions attack his intellect more or less, the sense of touch can bring him to madness and bloodshed.

Sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch are then the chief gateways of concupiscence which lead first to the imagination and to all the internal senses, until at last throughout the whole man, right to the marrow of his bones, the contagion spreads, according to the expressive words of S Augustine so well commented upon by Bossuet: "According to the teaching of S Augustine," he writes, "this evil of concupiscence spreads throughout the whole man. It runs, so to speak, in all his veins and penetrates to the marrow of his bones. It is a poisoned root which spreads its branches through all the senses: the hearing, the eyes, and all that is capable of pleasure feel the effect of it: the senses lend their aid, and the pleasure of one attracts and augments that of another. Their co-operation becomes an enchantment which lures us into the abyss of evil. Whichever one is attracted, all are on the alert. The scene catches the eye; tender words, impassioned song, reach the heart through the ears. Sometimes the evil comes like a sea, sometimes drop by drop; but in the end we are engulfed. Disease is in the blood and in the system before it shows itself by fever."[1]

The pleasures of the senses are not bad, nor is our natural tendency to seek them evil. All normal development of our faculties ends naturally in a certain satisfaction or pleasure, which has been planned by Providence to stimulate us to exercise necessary or useful actions according to the divine plan, that is to say, for the preservation of the individual or of the race.

[1] Bossuet, *Maximes et réflexions sur la comédie*, No. 8, t. XII, p. 324.

There are LEGITIMATE PLEASURES which can be good and holy, although the Jansenists falsely taught that all pleasure was evil and could not be sanctified. But there are some pleasures contrary to the law of God, and others at least dangerous; and the difficulty lies in deciding the boundary between dangerous pleasures and those which are legitimate, because the practice of what is allowed arouses in our senses a desire for what is forbidden, and the most innocent pleasures sometimes lead to guilty ones.

Such is the strife of the spirit against the flesh, a strife continual in this life and at times most bitter: no one has ever spoken of it better than S Paul. Let us see the description he has given of it with deep humility and painful feeling:

"We know," he says, "that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I work, I understand not. For I do not that good which I will, but the evil which I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I will not, I consent to the law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it; but sin (or concupiscence) that dwelleth in me. For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good, I find not. For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do. Now if I do that which I will not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore I myself, with the mind, serve the law of God; but, with the flesh, the law of sin."[1]

Elsewhere in the second epistle to the Corinthians S Paul returns again to this internal warfare, which has existed in all the children of Adam since the fall, and has been a perpetual source of humiliation and suffering. After having related his visions and ecstatic transports to the third heaven, he is not afraid to add humbly, "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which

[1] Rom. vii, 14-25.

thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me : My grace is sufficient for thee : for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak, then am I powerful."[1]

It is useless to add anything to this grievous picture of the daily strife between the spirit and the flesh. It is taken from life, and it has been experienced. It is always to be found in the children of Adam, at least in varying degrees, because all—as we have already mentioned—are not equally tainted with this original fall. We have met at times, with admiration and with deep respect, virginal souls who are exceptionally privileged by a secret design of Providence, and seem hardly touched by the cursed breath of Satan.

Others, on the contrary, without being vicious, are born with fearful tendencies to evil, and to conquer them they need a much stronger discipline. But these are the exceptions which divine Justice will treat with more indulgence. However it may be, everyone must fight and no one can escape. We must conquer or perish.

ARTICLE II

Its Effects

It is clear that the effects of concupiscence of the senses vary in different persons according to the generosity or meanness of their souls. If the soul fights courageously, especially before it has contracted any vicious habit, it undoubtedly suffers in the beginning for a certain time, but it always emerges from the trial purified, exalted, mistress of itself and rich in merit and honour. Moreover, as the soul increases its conquests over the senses, so do these become more temperate and calm ; they revolt less violently and more rarely ; and although they force us to keep guard during our whole lives and to remain, as it were, in a state of armed peace, this peace is most enviable and like a foretaste of eternal peace.

On the other hand, if our will is weak and yields to temptation, the temptation increases day by day in fre-

[1] 2 Cor. xii, 7-10.

quency and intensity. It never says, "Enough," but always, "*More, more.*" The more we give it, the more it demands, because repetition develops its powers and activities. Finally, these demands, unceasingly more frequent and more masterful, end in becoming a veritable slavery. Frequent examples of this may be seen in smokers, or in drunkards, who end in not being able to do without their tobacco or their alcohol. Then desire gets the better of reason and the animal instincts triumph: *Homo cum in honore esset, non intellexit; comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis* (Ps. xlviii, 13).

Such a humiliation is quite opposed to Christian perfection, which strives to raise man in order to make him like to God, who is a spirit, and to deify him: *divinæ consortes naturæ*. The flesh in its conquest of the spirit has stopped all this and changed the position entirely; and what is even more serious, it has made cure almost impossible, because it has destroyed in man the taste for nobler pleasures, and a delight in divine things, and has enveloped the soul in a species of blindness. Even if the intellect has kept its judgement clear in science, literature or art, it has become more and more warped with regard to religious and moral questions. In the startling picture drawn by Daniel, the sinner has his gaze fixed henceforward on the earth and refuses to raise his eyes to heaven: *Et everterunt sensum suum, et declinaverunt oculos suos ut non viderent cœlum* (Dan. xiii, 9).

"There is no other sin," says Bourdaloue, "which casts such a profound darkness over man. . . . We see these men—slaves to their sensuality, at the moment that passion overwhelms them, shut their eyes to every consideration divine or human. They lose all knowledge of themselves, of their own sins and of God."[1]

Such is the evil wrought by sensuality and especially by the vice of impurity. We might ask if there is a greater evil than pride. The answer to this question must depend on the point of view. As pride in itself is a revolt of the spirit against God, and sensuality is a revolt of the flesh against the spirit, it is clear that pride is a greater evil; but sensuality is a more debasing fall. The spirit which revolts against God is still spirit; but it becomes like flesh in sub-

[1] Bourdaloue, *Sermon sur l'impureté*, t. III, p. 97.

mitting to the power of the flesh and lowering itself to the level of the beasts.

But as the fall of pride usually entails a second fall in the flesh the two evils are usually combined. Finally, the flesh is more formidable in its attacks than pride, on account of the violence of passion which blinds the spirit and weakens the will. Therefore there is more malice in pride, but sins of the senses are more debased.

ARTICLE III

Safeguards and Remedies

SAFEGUARDS. One ordinary, although indirect, means of curbing the passions is to develop the faculties of the mind by study. It is a well known fact that the study of literature and science demands and effects a certain freedom from sense activity. Those who have a great love for study are generally pure, or at least only have isolated lapses from which they quickly rise: and one seldom sees them becoming slaves to their lower passions. They live constantly in a world of ideas and free themselves more and more from the pleasures of gluttony or others still more gross. The higher pleasures of the mind are sufficient to attract them entirely. Study thus becomes, as it were, a guarantee of purity, and purity in its turn becomes a guarantee of intelligence, because if the pleasures of the senses blunt and dull the mind, chastity sets it free for the contemplation of truth and above all, eternal truth: *Beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt* (Matt. v, 8).

The natural explanation of this is that all the powers of our souls are limited and what they lose on one side they gain on another; just as an excessive use of the senses lessens the power of the mind, so an increased use of the mind lessens the desires of the senses.

Natural and immediate REMEDIES:

Pagan philosophy tried to fight this great evil, and we see, especially in the Stoic School, three excellent rules of conduct which are summed up in the well-known formula: "abstain and endure,"—*abstine, sustine.*

1. *Abstain.* That is to say, in order that one should not overstep the limit, it is prudent to stop short of the limit

allowed. To imagine that we can stop in time at the precise limit where lawful pleasure ends and guilty pleasure begins, is like imitating an acrobat who, with rod in hand, walks for amusement on the tight-rope. For a hundred who try, scarcely one succeeds in keeping his balance, and even he one day or other may end in being overcome by inattention and dizziness, and pay the penalty of his rashness. Clement of Alexandria says: *Cito facient quæ non licent, qui faciunt omnia quæ licent.*

Christian morality has adopted this wise rule of pure reason. It has been raised and idealised by thoughts of which paganism has not even dreamed. Abstain, says Christian morality in its turn, from going to the limit of pleasures which are allowed, not only through a cold and selfish consideration dictated by prudence, but above all through an affectionate scrupulousness arising from your love of God.

Thus a child who loves his father dearly is always afraid of displeasing him, and keeps away, not only from what is forbidden, but even from that which has the appearance of evil; and yet he knows that he is depriving himself time after time of a hundred things, even innocent in themselves, in order to please his father.

There has never been any harm done to the body and to bodily health by cutting off some pleasure which delights the eyes, the ears, and particularly taste, smell and touch: sacrifices in eating and drinking are the only ones which need discretion and care. Between reasonable gratification of the needs of nature and *excessive indulgence* the limit is sufficiently uncertain, and the greatest saints have bemoaned the difficulties into which this uncertainty has thrown their conscience.

2. To abstain is not sufficient for our security; the Stoic maxim goes further: to abstain and *to endure*. Abstaining from pleasure as the enemy of virtue is only the first step which prudence and wisdom make in the struggle against sensuality. A better protection against sensual obsession is to learn to suffer with a calm and tranquil soul, to apply to oneself the goad of suffering in order to escape the goad of tempting pleasure. It is in this voluntary wrestling with suffering that the will is disciplined and hardened, ending at last by gaining the mastery over itself and command over its whole nature.

It is here that the Stoic morality is great, greater and finer than any other conception of human morality; and yet this morality is partially false and incomplete. False because it denied that suffering was an evil, and because it taught not only endurance of suffering, but even contempt for it as though it did not exist: *impavidum ferient ruinæ!* This teaching is foolish and a parade of human pride. Stoic morality is false, and it is above all incomplete, but Christianity has found the key to its completion and has transfigured it by love.

Before God had shown from the cross the virtue of suffering, this cross, debased and stained with blood, appalled poor human nature. It was indeed an object of contempt for the Jews and Gentiles, left to the lot of criminals and public malefactors. A God suffered and his love changed suffering into a precious grace, a thing to be desired: it has glorified suffering, or rather has gained the grace for us to glorify ourselves by suffering.

In truth, to suffer with patience, coupled with love, is henceforth not only a work of expiation and reparation, purifying and strengthening the will against the revolts of the spirit and the flesh and thereby gaining final perseverance, but it is a perfect act of love, the highest union of a human creature with the life of God who is Love. *Deus caritas est* (1 Jo. iv, 16). And this was the reason why our Lord, visible image of the invisible God, *imago Dei invisibilis*, became the Man of Sorrows, *vir dolorum*. It was for this that Our Lady and all the saints shared in this chalice according as they shared to a greater or less degree in this divine Life: and priests are truly second Christs, that is to say saviours of souls, in proportion to their love of sacrifice and self-immolation, and according to their own realisation of that sublime phrase: *sacerdos et victima*.

We see therefore that there would be reason for reproach if the well-known teaching of the Stoics had merely been imitated by Christianity, or if it had not been transformed by our sacred writers under the inspiration of a "new spirit." The ordinary work of grace does not suppress nature: faith does not suppress reason, but elevates it to transcendent heights. It is the seal of the supernatural and divine, and cannot be copied.

ARTICLE IV

Mortification

The great natural remedy for concupiscence of the flesh is mortification, with its two divisions summed up in the well-known words, *Abstine et sustine*: "Abstain and endure." We have shown the general reason for it; we will now speak of its practice.

First, is it better to practise INTERIOR mortification of the spirit and will or EXTERIOR mortification of the body? And in the mortification of the body must we inflict suffering on ourselves OF OUR OWN FREE WILL or be content with the penalties WHICH COME FROM God as we go through life?

To the FIRST QUESTION we answer without hesitation that interior mortification of the spirit and the will is assuredly of a higher value than the mortification of the body, but it is a great mistake to be content with that alone. The example of the saints is given us to put us on our guard against this error. We cannot quote a single example of a saint who was content with interior mortification; we see that they were wholly devoted to the practice of bodily penance, and even to the use of hair shirts, haircloth and other terrible instruments of penance.

The teaching of Holy Church and all spiritual writers on this important point is no less unanimous. Finally, reason shows that as little bodily mortifications are of their nature easier than mortification of our thoughts and desires, it is contrary to all method to begin with more difficult exercises instead of preparing the way by easier ones. In fact, experience proves that no one becomes mortified in spirit without the practice of mortification of the body. Father Faber has also said: "I tremble when people speak much of interior mortification, it sounds so like a confession that they are leading comfortable lives."[1] In fact, those who dispense with mortifications of the body do not usually practise any mortification. Experience proves the truth of this.

The opposite error is to be feared much less. We rarely see people practising mortification of the body who have not determined at least to practise that of the spirit. To resolve

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, ch. xi.

to mortify the body in the manner of Indian fakirs, a class of mistaken devotees who completely exclude the interior and spiritual life, would be for a Christian an absolute absurdity which by reason of its very excess is not to be feared.

To the SECOND QUESTION we answer that the ills of the body sent by Providence and chosen by God are undoubtedly of a higher value than those we choose for ourselves, in which vanity and our own pleasure may be found. To endure, however, these trials of Providence with courage we must first accustom ourselves to a methodical exercise of voluntary mortification. Without this preparation, sickness, suffering, the least change in the seasons, will make us sad and depressed, and sometimes irritate and even anger us; then we lose all the advantage and merit of these sufferings.

The choice of a *particular species of mortification* belongs to the province of the director of each individual soul. Everyone needs a rule of life drawn up entirely for his own needs. However, there are several points in common which it will be useful to state in order to help us in directing souls.

A GOOD METHOD ought to be graduated in severity. First practise abstaining from useless pleasures, then from dangerous passions, keeping suffering and inflicted pain until the end. These three classes of penance do not belong exclusively to the three different stages in the spiritual life, but are only their chief characteristics.

The mortifications of the body may be divided into FIVE main CLASSES:

Firstly, penances which directly affect the flesh: privation in eating, drinking and sleep, endurance of cold and heat, use of the discipline, haircloth, chains studded with bits of iron and the like.

(*a*) Observe that these corporal penances should only be employed in obedience to our director and never on our own initiative, except in the case of little insignificant mortifications in eating and drinking.

(*b*) The director must prescribe these mortifications with the greatest care, especially the curtailing of sleep, the enduring of cold and heat and all those mortifications which may affect health.

(*c*) To persevere in the mortifications we have chosen is infinitely more important than their number or quality. It is the repetition of the same acts which alone can have

any influence on our passions and habits. For example, the habit of rising regularly at a fixed hour.

(*d*) To attack mercilessly any inordinate pleasure which we may have in eating and drinking. Some devout people have a sorry reputation for the pleasures of the palate. "There are four classes of men especially liable to gluttony," wrote Brillat-Savarin: "financiers, doctors, literary men and devout people: the financiers on account of outward display; doctors on account of the allurement of food and drink; literary men as a recreation; and devout people by way of compensation." Whatever is the reason for our sensuality we must fight it unflinchingly.

Secondly, mortification of the body consists in controlling our external senses, especially our eyes and ears: checking any display of levity or curiosity.

Thirdly, the acceptance of the pains and sufferings of life (changes in the seasons, poverty) and even death itself, in the spirit of penance.

Fourthly, all acts of sacrifice and self-denial—e.g. instructing children, helping the poor, visiting the sick.

The fifth class consists of the daily round, the common task.

INTERIOR MORTIFICATION belongs to the mind and the will.

1st. *Mind.* To go against our own judgement, our own ideas. To give in, in questions of doubt. To keep silence in certain cases and have respect for the advice of our superiors: not to judge others, but to leave that to God. And if it is necessary to point out any fault to another, to do it gently and unassumingly.

2nd. *Will.* To conform our will always to that of God and as far as possible to that of our fellows. To give in, to be agreeable. To be all things to all men. To put up with insults and bad treatment. To have courage in temptation, in times of depression or sadness, to endure trials and all interior troubles, to fight against discouragement and despair. Each of these different kinds of mortification has its own particular indication, and demands an individual method of treatment which is beyond our scope to outline here.

We will end with an important remark on the *choice of mortifications.*

Suffering is only a *means* of becoming holy. It is not an *end* in itself. To practise suffering for the sake of suffering

is a great mistake. Yet it is not rare to see directors giving this maxim as a rule of conduct: "*To do in every case the opposite of what we wish.*"

Nothing is more contradictory than this rule. If what we wish is good, if it is the practice of a natural virtue, why condemn it? Why forbid certain souls to appear good and affectionate to their friends, to visit the poor, to console the afflicted, because they find a real pleasure in these acts of charity? Such a theory would check virtue from the time when it becomes pleasing to us, and would suppose that our hearts should never love the things of God or be in harmony with grace.

Perfection could never come from an idea so detestable, unnatural, and opposed to Catholic teaching. It is an error of Jansenism.

Let us love and practise mortification as a means and not as an end. The end is to acquire virtue, the love of God and of souls taking up and dominating our whole life; that is the precious jewel, voluntary suffering is only the setting for this jewel, and has its sole value in preserving the love of God in our hearts.

CHAPTER V

Inordinate Love of Riches

THE two concupiscences of the spirit and the flesh, of which we have just been speaking, beget a third —the desire for riches. In its turn this new passion, the thirst for gold—*auri sacra fames*, as the old Latin poet calls it—strengthens the other two and makes with them the poisonous source from which spring all the evils which scourge this world: *Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas*, proclaims S Paul the Apostle, and daily experience confirms the truth of it. Desire for riches is the continual cause of civil strife and international warfare. Behind all litigation you will always find more or less disguised, and sometimes frankly avowed, opposition or rivalry between material interests. To show how great an obstacle to the spiritual life and Christian perfection is this unbridled love of riches, we shall study ITS NATURE, the PERILS to which it exposes our souls, and then we shall point out the REMEDIES for so great an evil.

ARTICLE I

Its Nature

The riches which we treat of here are all the material comforts which supply our wants or make this earthly life pleasant, whether they are natural benefits like the soil and landed property, or whether they are the fruits of industry and art, like factories, houses and furniture, or whether they are personal property like gold and silver, which enable us to buy the others. Certainly riches, thus interpreted, are NOT BAD IN THEMSELVES. They are even to a great extent a condition of life, and even of intellectual life, because science and art cannot expand and develop without great outlay. Riches are also a condition of life and prosperity for societies, even for religious communities: the works of God do not escape from this law, because they are not, and cannot be, purely spiritual. They belong to this earth, too, since they need resources for life, development and prosperity.

Unfortunately, fallen man soon abused this gift of Providence, perhaps even more than he has abused the others, and he has spoilt it by a TRIPLE MISUSE.

I. He has made of riches an instrument for his pride. He believes he grows in importance in proportion to the wealth he accumulates. Therefore, he keeps on amassing wealth unceasingly and untiringly, never saying "Enough!" These alien riches elate his heart, make him proud, insolent, and heedless of the opinion of people who have no property. He becomes filled with pride and ambition. *Quo non ascendam?* He thinks with money he can go everywhere, buy everything, even the goodwill of the men of his time, or the votes of the people on election day, honorary distinctions and the highest dignities, even justice and people's consciences. Thus, in the hands of the proud, money is the most powerful instrument which rules the world; even kings and their governments have been obliged to bow to its dictates more than once. We speak to-day of an "Iron King," "Steel King," "Petrol King," "Napoleon of Finance." These dictate to sovereigns and peoples with most intolerable tyranny, proving thus to the very words the saying of Scripture, *Pecuniæ obediunt omnia* (Eccli. x, 19).

II. In the second place, riches become an easy inducement to *sensuality*. Comfort, good cheer and pleasure—at least in their most elegant forms—are only accessible to the favourites of fortune. Riches are also the modern stake in great questions of public life. They are pursued with greed, passion and every kind of means, to the detriment of personal health and one's own good; they are sought without regard to the rights of others. They are pursued with most risky speculations and often with the gravest injustice. The world will enjoy and procure every possible pleasure at any price *per fas et nefas*, regardless of conscience, for the thirst for gold has first blunted it and then killed it outright.

III. Finally, there are so many attractions for the heart of man in the love of riches, that he ends by acquiring them not as a means by which higher ends may be achieved, but as an end in themselves. The miser hoards for the sake of the hoard itself, and not to make use of his gathered treasures. Gold becomes a kind of idol and a new god for the miser. That is the reason why Scripture has called avarice

a veritable idolatry, that of the golden calf: *Avarus, quod est idolarum servitus* (Eph. v, 5).

Bossuet has thus described and explained this strange aberration of minds. Love is blind, he says, and creates in the object of its passion charms which it has not in reality, and which are only the product of imagination. But let the great orator speak himself. "When we look on money as an instrument by which we may acquire other benefits—for example, pleasure or high places in the world—we are not avaricious: we may be sensual or ambitious. He who does not dare to touch his money, who is only its sad guardian and does not seem to claim any right except that of looking at it, is truly called avaricious. . . . It is like a sacred object which he is not allowed to touch with his hands. His passion embellishes in imagination the object of its adoration. He gives to his gold and his silver a lustre not given by nature. He is dazzled with this false lustre: the light of the sun, which is the true joy of his eyes, would not appear so beautiful to him. And what does he gain in possessing something which, though it surrounds him, cannot satisfy his soul? That is why the wise man prefers him who eats and drinks and takes delight in the product of his own work, because he at least fills his stomach and fattens his body while riches feast only the eyes."[1]

Of these THREE MISUSES OF RICHES it is useless to inquire which is the most irrational. We need only know that they are all so great an offence in the eyes of God, that they bar a man from the kingdom of heaven and *a fortiori* from Christian perfection. The sentence of our Lord upon the evil rich is explicit: *Vae vobis divitibus* (Luke vi, 24), and he adds: "Amen I say to you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle."[2] To understand better the reasons for this terrible pronouncement, let us examine more closely the formidable dangers to which the passion for money exposes us.

[1] Bossuet, *Traité de la concupiscence*, c. ix, t. XII, p. 55.

[2] Amen dico vobis, quia dives difficile intrabit in regnum cœlorum. Et iterum dico vobis: Facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire, quam divitem intrare in regnum cœlorum (Matt. xix, 23, 24).

ARTICLE II

Its perils

The perils to which we are exposed by the actual possession of riches, or the inordinate demand for them, are very numerous. But we may divide them into THREE CLASSES. Riches try to bind our hearts to earth and all its vanities, and at the same time to share our hearts with God, and because we cannot serve two masters, it is God who is likely to be supplanted.

I. THE FIRST OF THESE PERILS is a continual temptation to pride, pleasure or avarice. All the charms of this triple concupiscence are united to tempt one who is possessed of great riches. He will not only eagerly pursue honours and pleasures, but honours and pleasures will come before him, knock at his heart, and surround him with a thousand enticements. The more he makes use of his riches the more he will be tempted to use them to his own advantage or to gain new wealth, because the thirst for gold is insatiable and never says " It is enough! " It is this first peril which experience in life shows, with much evidence, to be so full of snares that the pagan philosophers were themselves disturbed by it. Thus, on the testimony of S Jerome, it has been said of Crates of Thebes, that, appalled at the aspect of this danger, he ended by throwing all his gold into the sea and exclaiming, " Perish, evil passions : I drown you that I may not be drowned by you! *Abite, inquit, pessum, malæ cupiditates: ego vos mergam, ne ipse mergar a vobis.*[1] Thus, with even more right, should a true Christian think who aspires to the joys of higher things, and more especially a minister of Christ consecrated to God's work, who ought not to think of any other loss or gain than that of souls, in accordance with the words of the Apostle : *non quæro quæ vestra sunt, sed vos* (2 Cor. xii, 14).

II. THE SECOND OF THESE PERILS is to divide the heart of man between the love of God and the love of money. And we can well apply to the man who is in love with riches what S Paul said of the possession of a wife. " He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God ; but he that is with a wife is solicit-

[1] S Jerome, *Adv. Jovinian.*, ch. xiii.

ous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife ; and he is divided."[1]

Moreover, he who allows himself to be engrossed in business or in the affairs of this world has no room in his heart for higher love or for the delights of a spiritual life. He has hardly got the leisure for it. What pains, anxieties, cares of every kind accompany the management of these riches! Only to get them overwhelms us with work and worry ; their possession fills us with continual fears and anxieties ; their loss troubles us, plunges us into grief and despair. That is why our Lord in his parable of the sower has not hesitated to compare the riches of this world to brambles and thorns by the roadside, which prick and tear those who go astray and at the same time stain their souls with blood.

When the heart is thus harassed and taken up with a thousand worldly cares, it is very difficult to find time for quiet meditation and for living the interior life in union with our Lord.

III. But there is a THIRD PERIL even more dangerous. Of the two loves, one of God and the other of money, which is the one which will eventually triumph ? Is not a devoted passion for gold already the beginning of a revolt against God, and is not the continual fear of losing this one day a weakening of our confidence in God and of our filial love ? The break with God has already begun.

The Evangelist bids us look at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, which neither sow nor reap and yet lack nothing—not certainly to encourage us in idleness, but to calm our intense uneasiness and to teach us to trust in God whose grace will never fail us. In spite of these urgent prayers for confidence the unthinking rich man prefers to trust in himself and in his treasures. It is a kind of idolatry which dethrones God in our hearts and drives away his love, because we cannot serve two masters—God and money : *Non potestis Deo servire et mammonæ* (Matt. vi, 24). The peril of seeing God supplanted in our affection is manifest. But even when we can keep ourselves from the fatal slope and preserve a certain equilibrium, the sharing of our love with God, who does not wish to share, will surely

[1] Qui sine uxore est, sollicitus est quæ Domini sunt, quomodo placeat Deo. Qui autem cum uxore est, sollicitus est quæ sunt mundi, quomodo placeat uxori, et divisus est (1 Cor. vii, 32, 33).

dry up in our souls the deep springs of the spiritual life and apostolic zeal. It is impossible to join together the spirit of devotion for noble and holy causes, and the spirit of self-interest and avarice—the love of God and the love of money : it is like mixing fire and water.

I fear that if S John Baptist had been the favourite or pensioner of Herod he would not have kept his terrible " *non licet !* " for long—if even he had ever dared to pronounce it! and if men had never despised riches the Church would never have seen an Athanasius, a Basil, a Chrysostom—intrepid defenders of her inviolate rights, making tyrants tremble on their thrones by rejecting their favours. She would never have seen the spiritual conquests of S Francis Xavier and those of her foreign missionaries, nor those miracles (which are no less marvellous though they are not seen) of S Vincent de Paul and of his Sisters of Charity. Once again, we cannot serve two masters : God and Money.

ARTICLE III

Its remedies and safeguards

There is only one really great remedy for the love of riches : it is to give up entirely of one's own free will all one's possessions, as did the apostles and first disciples of Jesus Christ, and as all religious orders still do. This remedy strikes at the very root of the evil ; but it is not within the reach of all generous souls. But there are many smaller remedies which can be practised by all and are summed up in one word, " poverty of spirit," or the spirit of poverty. We will explain.

I. The GREAT REMEDY for so great an evil has been taught us by our Lord, who proclaimed it by his own eloquent example. When he came into this world, he willed to be born poor and without fortune in the poor stable at Bethlehem, to live poorly by the work of his hands in the workshop of Nazareth, to die naked on a cross, and to " live poor " all his life, having not where to lay his head, when the foxes had their holes and the birds of the air their nests, *Vulpes foveas habent et volucres cœli nidos; Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet* (Matt. viii, 20). His kingdom is not of this world.

Setting this great example of voluntary poverty and con-

tempt for riches, our Saviour had every right to exact from his apostles and disciples the actual abandonment of all their goods as the first and essential condition of their apostolate. The reader will recall that unforgettable scene of the rich young man which is given by S Matthew, S Mark, and S Luke. One day when our Lord was going from Judæa to Galilee a short time before his last journey to Jerusalem, a young man, whose name the Evangelist does not give, came to our divine Master, prostrated himself at his feet, and asked what he should do to gain eternal life: *Magister bone, quid boni faciam ut habeam vitam æternam?* (Matt. xix, 16). And our Lord answered: "Thou knowest the commandments: keep them": *Præcepta nosti; serva mandata.* It is in truth the essential condition for ordinary callings, and it is the first condition for more perfect vocations. Now the young man aspired to a higher vocation, and doubtless desired to enter the ranks of the disciples; he asked to know the other conditions, because his conscience told him that he had observed the first from his infancy: *Omnia hæc custodivi a juventute mea: quid adhuc mihi deest?* Here is the reply: there is still one thing wanting: *Quo audito Jesus ait ei; unum adhuc tibi deest*: What? Are not purity and innocence of life sure signs of a call from the Heart of Jesus?—our Lord, looking affectionately at this young man, loved him: *intuitus eum dilexit* (Mark x, 21). That, however, was not a sufficient title for becoming an apostle. No, there is one essential condition wanting for perfection. "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow me": *quæcumque habes vade, vende, et da pauperibus, et veni, sequere me* (Mark x, 21).

The same condition was imposed on the other apostles: "Every one of you," our Lord has said, "that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv, 33). S Peter, in the name of the whole Apostolic College, was able to remind our Lord one day with what generosity this total renouncement had been made: *Ecce nos reliquimus omnia et secuti sumus te; quid ergo erit nobis?* (Mark x, 28; Luke xviii, 28; Matt. xix, 27).

Now the conditions of Christian perfection have not been changed for us to-day; and if the Church, in her maternal kindness, on account of the necessity of the times and the material condition of modern society, does not demand from

perfect souls living in the midst of the world, even from its ministers, the actual surrender of all their property, both present and to come, she cannot however, without betraying her mission, dispense souls who aspire to Christian perfection, and above all ministers of God, from detachment of heart and spirit from the riches and things of this world. It is certainly the minimum to which we can reduce this first fundamental condition imposed on all Christians who wish to practise evangelical perfection.

And in truth in the eyes of people, even unbelievers, nothing is more dishonouring either in a Christian professing to be pious and devout or in a minister of Jesus Christ, than the sight of a mind intent on riches or a heart eager and greedy for wealth. On the other hand, nothing raises them more in public estimation and in the veneration of the faithful than the spirit of detachment, generosity, and voluntary poverty. In this supernatural mark we recognise the divine. Finally, this mark never goes alone ; there is with it always faith, piety, charity, zeal and a great uplifting of mind. Such a Christian, such a minister of Jesus Christ, will easily find the way to hearts : he will have the gift of touching the most rebellious and of saving them.

What a beautiful spectacle in the eyes of God and men is that of S Francis of Assisi, the son of a rich merchant. He stripped himself of his fortune, took Holy Poverty for his cherished spouse, set out to win souls barefooted, clad in a sack and a cord, in need of everything, and yet happier than the rich and powerful of this world. He was rich in God and that sufficed him. *Deus meus et omnia !* He shared immediately in the marvellous gifts of God, even to power over nature through his gift of working miracles ; thus he went through the world a peaceful conqueror.

This is why Father Faber, in one of his delightful books, has produced this deep and original thought, that the conversion of the English will be effected only by the sight of some religious order renewing the poverty of S Francis of Assisi.[1] It is a wonderful lesson for all those priests, secular or religious, who aspire to win souls.

II. If actual renunciation is not within reach of all who aspire to Christian perfection, all at least can practise POVERTY OF SPIRIT. Such poverty of spirit consists in the following :

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, ch. xi.

1. In the first place only to recognise money as a *means* and not as an end. It ought to be a "staff for the journey," as said S Augustine, and not an incitement to greed. This life itself is not our goal or our home: it is only a very short resting-place for the pilgrim who is journeying to the celestial city. *Non enim habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus* (Hebr. xiii, 14). We must then, as S Paul tells, use riches as if we had them not, and possess them as if we did not possess them: *Qui emunt tanquam non possidentes: et qui utuntur hoc mundo, tanquam non utantur* (1 Cor. vii, 30, 31).

2. The spirit of poverty lies in not letting our hearts become attached to riches if we possess them, or if we are poor, in not seeking them, but in contenting ourselves with the necessaries of life. For we can be poor in actual fact, and yet rich in desire and covetousness, just as we can be rich in fact and yet poor in spirit. It is one thing to have poison in the house and another to be poisoned ourselves, to use the comparison made by S Francis de Sales. These are his words: "He is rich in spirit," he says, "who has riches in his heart or has his heart in riches. He is poor in spirit who has no riches in his mind, nor his mind in riches. . . . There is a difference between having poison and being poisoned. Chemists have nearly all the poisons for their use in various emergencies, but they are not poisoned for all that, because they have the poison, not in their bodies, but in their shops. Therefore you can have riches without being poisoned by them, that is if you have them in your house or your purse, but not in your hearts. To be rich in fact, but to be detached from riches, is the greatest happiness of a Christian, because by this means he has the advantages of riches in this world and the merits of poverty in the next."[1]

3. The third degree, which is even more perfect, of practising poverty of spirit, while remaining in the world and keeping legal rights over one's possessions, is to deprive oneself of their enjoyment and only to make use of them in accordance with the advice of a wise director. Thus while remaining in the state or profession in which God has placed us in this world, we can practise a closer detachment of spirit and of heart and almost approach the religious state.

[1] *Introd. to The Devout Life*, pt. III, ch. xiv.

It is good, then, for us to follow to the letter S Paul's counsel of using things here below as if we had them not, since the freedom and pleasure of using them would be put into the hands of another wiser than ourselves—that is, into the hands of God: *Et qui utuntur, tanquam non utantur: præterit enim figura hujus mundi* (1 Cor. vii, 30).

III. Next, some MEANS OF SAFEGUARDING OURSELVES. They are very efficacious if they are taken early enough when one is still young. Youth does not yet dream of amassing capital: it is even rather light-hearted and improvident—older people are different, especially old bachelors and old maids. Youth is a favourable time for forming and developing the spirit of poverty.

A young man needs to be warned against the spirit of self-interest as soon as he comes in contact with the necessities of life, i.e. when he himself is anxious about material needs and the cares of the future. Otherwise the love of money will soon creep into his heart; this vice will grow with age and will be so rooted in maturity that it will defy all natural and supernatural remedies, *sero medicina paratur.*

1. The first means of safeguarding ourselves is to *alter our opinions* on the nature of the ownership of this world's goods. We are not masters of them. God is the first owner and he keeps control. We only have the enjoyment of them for a very short time and one day we must give him a strict account: *Redde rationem villicationis tuæ* (Luke xvi, 2). The rich here on earth are only the administrators of the property of God, the stewards appointed by divine Providence either for the poor and unfortunate, or for religious and social works. To give to the poor is then to lend to God, and it is a first-class investment made in the bank of heaven. There we need not fear the rust that destroys hidden treasure, nor thieves who break in, nor fraudulent bankers; and it is only there that the Evangelist bids us place our treasures: *Nolite thesaurizare vobis thesauros in terra, ubi ærugo et tinea demolitur, et ubi fures effodiunt et furantur. Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in cœlo, ubi neque ærugo, neque tinea demolitur, et ubi fures non effodiunt, nec furantur* (Matt. vi, 19, 20).

2. The second means of safeguarding ourselves is to meditate often on the *emptiness and insecurity* of all the goods of this world: *Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas*

(Eccli. i, 2). Not only do they pass like a cloud, not only do they escape us and leave us if we do not leave them, but they are powerless to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our hearts, which are made for higher riches : *Ad majora natus sum.* Instead of appeasing hunger and thirst they rouse them the more, they rouse in the blood of our veins the fever of every concupiscence and lead us to certain ruin which is the prelude of eternal damnation.

3. After the *reform* of the mind comes that of the *will.* It must work in accordance with faith and help us to detach ourselves from money and all the things of this life.

(*a*) To give alms according to our station. Never to refuse the unfortunate when we can help them, even at the cost of some sacrifice.

(*b*) To learn to be contented with a little and cut down all unnecessary expenditure in our own habits and in those of our household, and to practise to the letter if possible the counsel of the apostle : Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content : *Habentes alimenta et quibus tegamur, his contenti simus* (1 Tim. vi, 8).

(*c*) If even the necessaries of life are sometimes lacking, not to be too depressed, and above all not to complain to others, but to endure courageously in the spirit of penance and poverty.

(*d*) To anticipate sometimes these deprivations of our own accord and to retrench necessaries—but with suitable discretion—in eating and drinking, in sleep and rest, in warmth and comfort, with the same spirit of penance and voluntary poverty.

(*e*) To love to work with our hands as the poor do, to honour at least manual work in others if circumstances forbid us to undertake it ourselves. In any case, to wait on ourselves and to do, as far as possible, without the services of others ; it is an ideal easy to realise.

(*f*) To forgive quickly little injustices in order that we may avoid disputes and legal actions, according to the wise advice of the Master : And if a man will take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him : *Ei qui vult tecum judicio contendere, et tunicam tuam tollere, dimitte ei et pallium* (Matt. v, 40).

But the great safeguard against love of money—one which ought to be the first and the last—is the love of God. Our

hearts have an infinite capacity for God and eternal things: we must hasten to fill them in order that no room is left for lower things. That is the best safeguard and also the best guarantee against the dangerous growth of cupidity and self-interest. *He who has Jesus has everything. Deus meus et omnia!* Unhappy are those who do not know this great secret of the happiness and power of the saints: *Si scires donum Dei!*

CHAPTER VI

The Scandals of the World

IT is not only within ourselves, in this triple concupiscence by which our fallen nature is thoroughly vitiated, that we find obstacles to Christian life and perfection, but also outside ourselves we have to fight against two powerful enemies: *the world and the devil.*

This world, cursed by our Lord on account of its scandals, *Vae mundo a scandalis!* (Matt. xviii, 7) surrounds us on all sides, and there is no one who has not too often felt the debasing effect of its contact. It lures us by false maxims, the seductive display of vanities and bad example, it ensnares us with its company, its intercourse, and its unhealthy and perverted literature.

Undoubtedly there are also in the world marvellous examples of charity, piety and edification. That is an exception. It is the Holy Church of Christ, Noe's ark in the general deluge, composed of practising Christians and even those Christians who still live more or less without doubting Christian traditions, and whose innate goodness has been inherited from their Christian ancestors. They are like an island in the middle of the world, an oasis in a desert of savage beasts. It was for this sea of iniquity in which the ark floats that the anathema from the mouth of our Saviour was uttered: *Vae mundo a scandalis!*

I. Let us emphasise above all the GRAVITY OF THIS CURSE, the echo of which is repeated time after time in the books of Scripture. They tell us that the world is wholly bad: its maxims, habits, ways and examples, produce nothing but evil. *Mundus totus in maligno positus est* (1 Jo. v, 19); it is in darkness,—*in tenebris* (Jo. i, 5); its pretended wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish: *terrena, animalis, diabolica* (Jas. iii, 15); its prudence is deadly: *prudentia carnis mors est* (Rom. viii, 6); its wisdom is folly: *Nonne stultam fecit Deus sapientiam hujus mundi?* (1 Cor. i, 20); God will make it his business

to ruin it: *Perdam sapientiam sapientium et prudentiam prudentium reprobabo* (1 Cor. i, 19); whence the command not to imitate the world or follow its examples: *Nolite confirmari huic saeculo* (Rom. xii, 2); the command not to love the world and what is in it: *Nolite diligere mundum neque ea quae in mundo sunt* (1 Jo. ii, 15); friendship with the world is enmity with God: *Amicitia hujus mundi inimica est Dei; quicumque ergo voluerit amicus esse saeculi hujus, inimicus Dei constituitur* (Jas. iv, 4). Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ, at the solemn hour after the Last Supper, announcing to his disciples the coming of the divine Paraclete, added that the world was incapable of receiving him: *Spiritum . . . quem mundus non potest accipere* (Jo. xiv, 17), and later, in his great sacerdotal prayer, he positively excluded the world from the prayer he made for his own followers: *non pro mundo rogo* (Jo. xvii, 9). The severance is then complete: it is a solemn excommunication of the accursed world.

Following the example of our Lord and his Apostles, the Fathers of the Church have used the same language, and their texts would fill volumes. We will be content with quoting this remarkable passage from the Confessions of S Augustine, who speaks with full knowledge. "Woe to you, impure stream of this world, who could resist your impetuous current? Shall we never see you dry? And how long will you ensnare the children of Eve in your tumultuous waves which lead to the abyss?"[1]

II. Such a complete agreement among sacred writers and Doctors of the Church presupposes GRAVE REASONS which we must inquire into.

1. The first of these reasons is the radical opposition between the first *principles* which govern the Christian life and those which direct that of the world.

The world places our goal and our supreme happiness here below. Its aim will always be to find the treasures of this world, riches, honours, pleasures; to do everything, and suffer everything, to attain them. The Christian on the other hand places his goal in God who is the True, the Good, the Beautiful, the infinite Happiness, in order to

[1] Væ tibi, flumen moris humani! quis resistet tibi? quamdiu non siccaberis? quousque volves Evæ filios in mare magnum et formidolosum? (*Confess.*, l. I, c. 16).

possess him in heaven and merit him in this life. That alone is necessary, *unum est necessarium* (Luke x, 42). What will it profit us then if we gain the whole world and suffer the loss of our own souls? *Quid prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur, animae vero suae detrimentum patiatur?* (Matt. xvi, 26).

2. From these first principles, which are dramatically opposed, come *rules* for life which are entirely different.

The Christian honours, above all, virtue and the interior life. The world only looks at what appears outside. "It asks if a man has performed great actions," says the *Imitation* (bk. iii, ch. xxxi, 5), "and not what is the spirit in which they were performed. The world inquires of a man's courage, his riches, his appearance, his ability: is he learned, a writer, a good singer, a clever workman? Few ask how humble he is in spirit, if he be patient, gentle, devout, recollected. Nature looks at the outside, grace is to be found within."

The worldly man, swayed by the passion of enjoying every good here below, will count sin as nothing or very little. Provided he is amused, all means are good and praiseworthy. The Christian, on the other hand, without despising the relaxations and enjoyments necessary for his feeble nature, will dread above all any offence against God. Like S John Chrysostom, he will fear nothing but sin; *unum timet Chrysostomus, peccatum.* He will never forget that his soul is immortal and that God will judge it. Nay more, to fear the judgements of God is not sufficient for him, and as he loves God as a Father most worthy of all love, he will always seek to please him in everything. Such a thought has no existence in the heart of a worldly man.

The worldly man ends in no longer being able to distinguish clearly between good and bad, and in blindly following without scruple the prejudices, the maxims, the habits, and the manners—even when they are most bizarre and unbecoming—of the world around him, which often thrust themselves, whether he will or no, upon him. The road he chooses is broad and easy. There is no inconvenience, and more amusement than fear. He only thinks of pleasing the world and being pleased. He thinks of festivals, sights, vain amusements, but he does not think of salvation and eternity. In a word, he lives only for the present, without any more regard for the future life than if it could never

overtake him: his horizon is bounded by the earth. Now the Christian sees in such conduct more than imprudence, he sees veritable folly, because it is the subversion of the natural order of things as well as the supernatural order which intends that all should be subordinated to our last end, that is, to God and his glory, and above all to our own salvation. It is not only a counsel, it is a most imperative law.

3. The opposition between the world and Jesus Christ is still more evident in the *evangelical counsels of perfection* or the beatitudes given in the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are the *poor in spirit*," exclaims our Lord. "If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow me." Unfortunate are the rich who have their happiness in this world! It is more difficult for them to enter Heaven than it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. The world replies: "Happy are the rich who want for nothing: who have all they wish for, and can satisfy all their fancies, who every day have a sumptuous table and dwell in palaces filled with all that comfort and luxury can invent. A fool indeed is he who loves poverty and prefers it to riches!"

Jesus Christ teaches: Thrice happy are those who suffer and mourn if they know the worth of their suffering. I will console them on earth, and in Heaven. Woe to you who laugh and amuse yourselves here below, because your laughing will be turned one day into gnashing of teeth in the eternal abyss. The world replies that it has in no way understood the meaning of suffering and that it is very foolish not to prefer and enjoy pleasure as much as one can. Happy then are those who only seek for enjoyment, amusement, and a merry life!

Jesus Christ adds also: Blessed are the pure in heart, because they shall see God and share one day his eternal happiness. The world replies that it has no regard for the blessed vision of God, and that its one desire is to be happy on this earth, and to attain that end all means are good, all scruples useless and vain. Success excuses everything, justifies everything: purity of heart is only an illusion.

Jesus Christ says again: Blessed are those who are mild and peaceful, because they will win hearts and possess earth and heaven. The world, on the other hand, adores brute force and puts its trust in the power of armies. It admires

above all the great conquerors who have ravaged the earth with fire and sword, who have conquered empires at the cost of rivers of blood, while forcing whole nations into slavery to adorn their triumphal progress. The world has written their names in enduring characters in the annals of its history.

Jesus Christ says last of all: Blessed are the humble and those who suffer persecution for justice, who are calumniated for my sake, who live and die in obscurity, victims of the holy love of God. The glory of the Saints will be their recompense and their lot. The world, however, next to gold and silver, next to sensual pleasures, esteems only glory and honours, tyranny and independence. It considers unhappy those who lead a hidden life without any renown, spent in the unknown service of charity and the care of the poor, the sick, and the unfortunates of this world.

Such are the contradictory teachings of Jesus Christ and the world; and as they cannot both be true, we must choose between the two. Either this world or our Lord Jesus Christ is false, although he solemnly says: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life": *Ego sum via, veritas et vita* (Jo. xiv, 6).

But who would dare to accuse our Lord of deception and his Cross of folly? Let us leave the worldly people to go on their way of perdition: they are blind; *cæci sunt, sinite illos* (Matt. xv, 14), and let us not wonder that they hate us, for every good Christian is by his life an unvarying protest against theirs: *Nolite mirari si odit vos mundus* (1 Jo. iii, 13). Their road is wide and spacious, it seems strewn only with roses, which conceal, however, cruel thorns, and leads to the eternal abyss. Moreover, it is impossible to link together the two roads, that of the world and that of Jesus Christ, worldliness with devotion, serving good with serving evil. We cannot serve two masters so entirely different at the same time: *Nemo potest duobus dominis servire* (Matt. vi, 24). Neither allows a sharing of service, and the world itself only ridicules semi-religious people who are not sufficiently worldly to please it, and not holy enough to win its esteem.

Let us then attach ourselves to our Lord, who has the words of eternal life: *Ad quem ibimus? verba vitae aeternæ habes* (Jo. vi, 69), as S Peter said in his beautiful profession of faith, and let us follow his commands faithfully. We will

prove then that there is more true pleasure in his service than in that of the world; that the cross of Jesus Christ is lighter than that of the world, that it possesses grace and heavenly consolation which makes it sweet and lovable. Taste and see: *Gustate et videte!* (Ps. xxxiii, 9).

Remedies against the evils of the world.

1. There is first of all the heroic remedy of living in solitude as the Fathers of the desert did, in accordance with the example set by our Lord who willed to retire thither for at least forty days. We can live in that artificial solitude created by the *religious orders*, which is also called the *state* of perfection, because the atmosphere they possess is most favourable to advancement in evangelical perfection. In truth it is in religious orders that we most often meet perfect souls. They bind themselves of their own accord by perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They cast aside the advantages of the world, which they could freely use, in order to devote themselves more completely to the service of God, that is, to contemplation or apostolic work. These monasteries are chosen societies, in which are practised to great perfection all the Christian virtues in lives of sacrifice devoted to God and man.

But to be admitted to and live in them one must have special qualities and a vocation which is not given to all, but to a small chosen number.

Our Lord, instead of imposing this on his apostles and disciples, only asked from his Father the grace of keeping them from the scandals of the world without withdrawing them from it: *Non rogo ut tollas eos de mundo, sed ut serves eos a malo* (Jo. xvii, 15).

2. The *way in which we can defend ourselves* from the scandals of the world without withdrawing ourselves entirely from it, has been given to us by the Apostle S Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, when he tells those to whom he writes not to have the spirit of the world, but to keep free from it. "Brethren, the time is short; . . . It remaineth that they use this world as if they used it not": *Qui utuntur hoc mundo, tanquam non utantur: præterit enim figura hujus mundi* (1 Cor. vii, 31).

3. Finally, the last remedy is to strive with all our might against human respect. Not only to reproach ourselves very bitterly for any failing on this point, but to keep

others from it by uniting them into associations of good Christians, in order to give good example. In the seventeenth century S Vincent de Paul and M. Olier obtained marvellous results from the establishment of these societies, and in our times Catholic youth has learnt to imitate them with great success, even in our large schools, and in Parliament, where there are to be seen compact groups, strong enough to make their religious beliefs respected and also to win over those who are in doubt.

As an end to this subject we shall draw three practical CONCLUSIONS.

(*a*) To go into the world *heedlessly* and only *for pleasure* is almost always unwise, since its associations are often dangerous, and he who loves danger will perish in it. *Qui amat periculum in illo peribit* (Eccli. iii, 27).

(*b*) To go into the world through *necessity* due to business, or for the maintenance of social position, is certainly lawful, provided that we keep to the limits of necessity and convenience, and on condition that we practise prudence, mistrust of ourselves, discretion, and the modesty which befits a good Christian.

(*c*) To go into the world through *charity* or *zeal* is often good and perhaps even a duty of our state, if we hold public office or have an apostolic mission. It is necessary to act with a right intention, and with that prudence which ought to accompany all our works of charity and zeal. Let us then do our duty fearlessly, trusting in the protection of him who said "Have confidence, I have overcome the world!" *Nolite timere, ego vici mundum* (Jo. xvi, 33).

Let us, by way of conclusion, borrow a beautiful commentary on the counsels of S Paul to the world, from a great Christian scientist whose electro-dynamic discoveries have changed the face of the world. He will show us by his example how we ought to sanctify and idealise by a supernatural intention all things, including study and science.

Here is what we read in the personal notebook of the illustrious Ampère, whose centenary we have lately celebrated.

"The fashion of this world passes. If you live on its vanities you too will pass with it. But the truth of God remains eternally: if you live on that you will last with it.

My God! what are all the sciences, all the reasonings, all the discoveries of genius, all the vast conceptions which this world admires, and delights in so eagerly? In truth, pure vanity! . . .

"Work in the spirit of prayer. Study the things of this world, it is the duty of your state: but look at them only with one eye, that the other may be constantly fixed on eternal light. Listen to the philosophers, but listen only with one ear, that the other may always be ready to receive the sweet accents of the voice of your heavenly Friend.

"Write only with one hand; with the other hold tight to God's protection as a child clings to the clothing of his father. Without this you will certainly dash your head against a stone. May I always remember what S Paul said: *Use this world as if you use it not.* May my soul, from this day, remain united with God and Jesus Christ. Bless me, my God!"

What beautiful advice, which all the saints have so wonderfully followed! How noble will a life be which is thus directed, how holy and how fruitful! Death will be sweet and triumphant for such a soul because it will have the assurance that it has conquered the world: *Confidite, ego vici mundum!*

CHAPTER VII

The Empire of the Devil

THE transition from the world to the devil, called by our Lord himself the prince of this world, is easy and quite natural. The devil's *existence* and his evil deeds in this world are quite evident to any unbiased beholder, from the little he studies of history both sacred and profane, and from the knowledge which he has of life. With more reason then will every Christian filled with the spirit of faith be deeply convinced, and will continually guard against the snares of the enemy of the human race.

Leo XIII ordered all priests to say the following admirable prayer every day at the foot of the altar after the celebration of Mass.

" Holy Michael Archangel, defend us in the day of battle : be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust down to hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen."

Let us see then in the light of the Holy Gospel the EXTENT OF THE POWER of the devil over mankind.

From the very beginning of his public life our Lord began to preach by his example, and allowed the devil to tempt him thrice during his stay in the desert. In this well-known episode Satan seemed to have power, not only over the thoughts of men to lead them into temptation, but even over their bodies, since he transported Jesus to Jerusalem, to the summit of the temple, then on to a high mountain. On the other hand, Jesus shows us by resisting the tempter and by his triple victory, that Satan has not absolute power over mankind : that he is powerless over the liberty of those who resist him ; he cannot make them sin against their will. The sanctuary of the conscience is a temple that he cannot violate or profane without our consent. He can influence only those who are weak or lazy enough to yield voluntarily to his suggestions. Therefore in the last resort, Satan is rightly under the power of God, and philosophers who

pretend to make him the rival and the equal of the Most High, admitting two principles, the one good and the other bad, have fallen into a heresy of monstrous exaggeration—that of Manicheism. However immense and almost universal the empire of evil seems to appear at certain periods, let us await the end and the ultimate realisation of the providential plan of God: the gates of hell will not prevail in the gigantic struggle: *portæ inferi non prævalebunt* (Matt. xvi, 18), and the tragedy of the centuries will end in the brilliant triumph of good and of God.

The power of the devil OVER THE BODIES *of men* has been shown under two forms, called obsession and possession.

OBSESSION is a harassing by the enemy from without rather than from within. The devils can annoy and make men suffer in a thousand different ways. It may be by ringing cries, spoken insults, intolerable discordant noises, and even by inflicting on the body strange illnesses (Matt. xii, 22; xvii, 14 *seq.*). When they can make their victims suffer thus, it is to induce them to fall into sins of impatience, murmuring against God, anger, blasphemy, and even despair.[1]

The celebrated example of Job (Job i, 6, 8, 10; ii, 5, 7, etc.) shows us that God sometimes allows him to try us; it may be to purify our souls by this severe trial or it may be to exhibit the holiness and sanctity of his chosen ones. The examples of S Antony and other fathers of the desert are well known, and that of the Curé d'Ars, who is much nearer our own time, is still within our memory. We have already spoken of it in our treatise *Mystical Phenomena* (pp. 201, 347-8), to which reference may be made.

As for demoniacal *possessions*, they are, as it were, a higher degree of obsession, for the devil does not merely act on man from the outside; he takes possession interiorly of his members and personality, even to the point of apparently making him yield his moral responsibility more or less. He makes the man perform involuntary actions which are distasteful to him and against his inclination. He can even make him perform wonderful feats which surpass the power of Nature.

[1] Cf. Suarez, *De Angelis*, l. VIII, c. xx, t. II; Mazzella, *De Deo creante*, disp. II, a. 9, 92, n. 466-469, etc.; P. Verdun, *Le Diable dans la vie des Saints* (Paris, 1895).

These are *extraordinary* cases, at least in the Christian world, although in the heathen world they continue even under our eyes to be sufficiently frequent. The Church deals with these cases of diabolical possession by "exorcism," a practice frequently employed by Christ and the Apostles, who received from him explicit authority to drive out devils from those possessed. (Matt. x, 1, 8; Mark iii, 15). This study entrenches upon the subject of mystical theology, and leaving it we will keep to the *ordinary* signs of diabolical power.

SATAN'S USUAL POWER OVER THE SOULS of men assumes a double form; it can be *direct* or *indirect.*

Usually the devil is content to help the activity of the triple concupiscence which we all have in our hearts, either by stirring up in the mind unwholesome ideas which are lurking in the subconscious, or by himself introducing new ideas of which we had never thought; or in adding to some or other of these, new attractions and an alluring charm which we did not recognise. There is here the signature and unmistakable mark of the inventor of evil.

A *second* form of the activity of the devil, which is perhaps more subtle and more dangerous, consists in certain indirect *suggestions* from the spirit of evil, and their manner of arising needs to be explained briefly.

Stirring up impure thoughts, for example, is too coarse a temptation, and would have scarcely any chance of success with pure souls who aspire to perfection. For the enticement of these the devil has more crafty plans. Thus:

With regard to beginners who are starting on the way of perfection, or, as we say, being converted, the devil has a thousand schemes for dissuading them from their holy undertaking:

1. He will try first of all to *distract* them, and by amusing them to gain time. He will fill their minds with a thousand trifles or cares, anxieties or amusements, which will, at least, delay their setting out on the paths of perfection. Like the hardened sinner they will always put off for another day the moment for doing good. *Cras! cras!* And death overtakes them in their beautiful plans, and makes all their pious desires useless and vain. It is said that hell is paved with good intentions, and this is still more true of purgatory.

2. If the devil cannot prevent good actions, he will at least try to diminish them, and counsel a soul to aim lower.

Perhaps by a false humility, prudence, or an excessive mistrust in its own strength, the virtuous soul will be tempted not to give itself entirely to God, but to hold back on the pretext of modesty or humility. As if the task of examining our vocation belonged to anybody else but our spiritual directors: nobody can judge in his own case. Nature and the devil are very bad counsellors. . . .

3. Among the first difficulties which these souls which have just started in the way of perfection will meet, will be an onrush of thoughts more or less confused, to discourage them. Some swift interior sorrow, some scruple, some disappointment, will be the occasion of such temptations. A passing cloud, which mars our good temper, a remembrance of the past, a fear of the future; anything will suffice to give an opening to the tempter. Beginners who are still imperfect and far from being entirely subject to grace and the direction of the Holy Ghost always offer a vantage ground for the devil, for he never despairs of turning them from good.

4. It is above all after the first steps in sanctity which have cost us great effort and much work, that some relaxation seems due to us. The devil himself increases the early zeal of beginners in order to see such souls soon tired out, wearied, and seeking rest. Then comes sadness and weariness of heart which will soon bring them to slackness and tepidity.

5. After relaxation a soul which begins to look back on the past will soon be led by the devil to a *longing for change*, not indeed from good to evil, but to a lower standard and one that only appears good. This is a subtle artifice and easily disguised by fair pretexts, but which none the less leads to an early surrender. We lose also the fruits of our first efforts, and our acquired merits, and we run the risk of losing the vocation to which God has called us, and, under the influence of the devil, of embracing another which is unsuitable and full of danger.

6. Finally, souls more or less perfect may be the victims of *secret illusions* which have been skilfully suggested by the devil. Often the devil does not hinder them from doing good, because this very good helps to deceive them more easily. He flatters their self-love, their self-esteem, their vanity, their self-sufficiency. What can be more dangerous for making them trip and fall! What more desirable for the devil! It is his triumph and revenge on

God. These souls end then in believing themselves holy and in being agreeably deceived. Such is the subtle skill of the devil.

It is necessary then to DISTINGUISH SPIRITS, and here are the principal rules, according to Père Lallemant.

1. All that *takes away the peace* of the soul and its interior tranquillity comes surely from the devil. The work of God brings peace everywhere it enters : *pax vobis! pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis!* It is the first blessing brought to the earth by Jesus Christ after his birth and after his glorious resurrection. Since God joined together sanctity and happiness, all that takes away peace and brings with it trouble and sadness comes straight from the devil. Thus, says the proverb : " we recognise the serpent by its trail," and the evil one by his train of suggestion and the goal to which he would take us.

Therefore, all the hypothetical suggestions or conditions which only cause useless trouble, come also from the devil.

To ask, for instance, " What should I do if God abandoned me : if God asked for the sacrifice of my eternal salvation, etc. . . . " are chimerical propositions and contradictory ideas, which are not worth examination. If the enemy suggests them it is only to take away our confidence in God and to make us uneasy and discouraged. We must allow ourselves to trust in God, who will never fail those who have given themselves to him, and who only seek to please him in everything.

2. All that tempts a holy soul to relax and to adopt a lower standard, comes surely from the devil. For example, to indulge in extraordinary devotions while despising the usual ones, or to speak often of extraordinary graces which have been received and to pay little heed to the ordinary rules of Christian perfection, such as the examination of conscience and the correction of faults, filial submission to the advice of one's director, and, what is more important, to the teaching and practises of Holy Church—all these are surely the signs of a soul deceived by the devil.[1]

The REMEDIES against the work of the devil are chiefly preventative. Our Lord himself extolled watching and prayer : *vigilate et orate ut non intretis in tentationem* (Mark xiv, 38), and after him, the apostle S Peter pointed

[1] Cf. Lallemant, *Doctrine spir.*, p. 299-308.

out that this vigilance ought to extend to eating and drinking : *sobrii estote et vigilate,* because the enemy like a roaring lion prowls around you, *quia adversarius vester diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit, quærens quem devoret* (1 Pet. v, 8).

As regards direct resistance to the attacks of the devil, we must have recourse to the armour of faith : " resist him strong in faith," adds S Peter : *Cui resistite fortes in fide.* And S Paul has the same idea when he writes of the complete armour of the Christian : *Induite vos armaturam Dei ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli.* For, he says, we have to fight not only against flesh and blood, but against the powers of evil which govern this world of darkness, against the evil spirits in the high places. " Having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (with which our divine Saviour conquered and put the tempter to flight). By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit : and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints."[1]

Thus clothed for the fight against Satan with the armour of Christ, and full of confidence, not in himself, but in the power of God, *sufficientia nostra a Deo est* (2 Cor. iii, 5), the Christian must reject the temptation with contempt, as did our Lord : *vade Satana* (Matt. iv, 10), and Satan retired confuted, at least for a time : *Recessit ab illo usque ad tempus* (Luke iv, 13).

[1] Induite vos armaturam Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli. Quoniam non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem : sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum, contra spiritualia nequitiæ in cœlestibus. Propterea accipite armaturam Dei, ut possitis resistere in die malo, et in omnibus perfecti stare. State ergo succincti lumbos vestros in veritate, et induti loricam justitiæ, et calceati pedes in præparatione Evangelii pacis. In omnibus sumentes scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere : Et galeam salutis assumite, et gladium spiritus, quod est verbum Dei, per omnem orationem et obsecrationem orantes omni tempore in spiritu : et in ipso vigilantes in omni instantia et obsecratione pro omnibus sanctis (Ephes. vi, 11-18).

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion: Love and Sacrifice

THE conclusion of our first part, on the nature of Christian perfection, was *Love of God, and love of men for God's sake.* The conclusion of this second part on the obstacles to be overcome will be the watchword *Christian sacrifice.* Love and sacrifice are in truth inseparable, like the two sides of the same medal.

In heaven we shall love without the necessity of sacrificing ourselves. But here on earth since the fall it is far otherwise. We have just seen that the triple concupiscence which has ruined the delicate balance of human nature, together with the scandals of the world, and the temptations of the devil, lead us unerringly to a selfish consideration of ourselves, and turn us away from the love of God and our fellow-men. We cannot love God and our fellow-men without fighting and overcoming these evil tendencies to pride, to sensuality, to luxury, to inordinate love of riches, to self-love in all its forms, that is, without sacrificing ourselves. And this struggle, which begins with the dawn of reason, will continue every day until we draw our last breath. The watchword of the Christian religion is renunciation and sacrifice, its last word and final end will be that of love.

Our Lord forewarned us of it when we entered on our course: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me": *Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum et tollat crucem suam et sequatur me* (Matt. xvi, 24) (Luke ix, 23). And after our Lord, the apostles in their turn have not ceased to repeat the same teaching. "Christ also suffered for us," says S Peter, "leaving you an example that you should follow his steps" (1 Pet. ii, 21); and S Paul: "They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences": *Qui sunt Christi carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis* (Galat. v, 24); and to this impressive lesson he adds his own example, lest, as he says, having preached to others he may be condemned himself:

Castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo, ne forte cum aliis praedicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar (1 Cor. ix, 27).

There is, then, no true love of God and of our fellow-men without self-sacrifice: to expect it would be the greatest mistake, and one against which Holy Scripture does not cease from warning us. "My little children," cries the apostle S John, "let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth": *Filioli mei, non diligamus verbo, neque lingua, sed opere et veritate* (1 Jo. iii, 18). And S Paul, when enumerating the qualities which true charity ought to have to be lasting, adds: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil": *Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulatur, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur, non cogitat malum. . . .* (1 Cor. xiii, 4, 5). Now all these characteristics of true charity are so many forms of self-renunciation and sacrifice. And S James, to make this necessity of joining good works to faith more marked, gives us this example. If one of your brothers is hungry or thirsty, what use would it be to reply to him in fair words if you are not generous enough to open your purse? (James ii, 14 *et seq.*). Charity, like faith, is a barren virtue, without the works of self-renunciation and sacrifice: *Fides sine operibus mortua est* (*ibid.* ii, 20).

Thus love and sacrifice constitute Christian perfection, and any spiritual school, if it is Catholic, cannot neglect either one or other of these two elements, which are equally essential, though subordinate. Sacrifice is not the end, but only a means of love, and it would be a grave error, an inhuman error, to preach sacrifice as an end in itself. In its turn love makes sacrifice bearable and even lovable: *Ubi amatur non laboratur,* says the *Imitation, aut si laboratur, labor amatur.* We must never then, lose sight completely of the motive of love, but we must rather instil into it respect for duty and the fear of God. Particularly, when we have to deal with souls which are less noble and generous, we must arouse in them a fear of the judgements of God: *Initium sapientiæ timor Domini.* But this is only a question of tactics, tending to distinguish rather than to separate the schools of S Ignatius and of the Oratorians (which emphasise sacrifice), from that of the

lovable S Francis de Sales (which emphasises love). In practice a wise director will easily join the two tendencies according to the varied tastes and needs of each soul.

An *unexpected confirmation* of the fundamental truth that a Christian life in this world is inseparable from sacrifice and self-renunciation, has been given by natural science, and by the biological fact that life is a struggle and a triumph over the elements of destruction and death. The celebrated physiologist Bichat[1] did not hesitate to describe life as a " collection of forces which resist death," an opinion which has since become established. " In truth, the mode of life of these living organisms is such that all their surroundings try to destroy them. Inorganic bodies act unceasingly on them: they themselves have a continual reaction upon each other; they would soon succumb if they had not in themselves a permanent power of reaction. This power is that of life." What a beautifully vivid picture of the moral struggle and sacrifice necessary for a Christian life! At the same time what a clear proof that as effort and strife are the natural law for all living things, it is also the law of the supernatural order, which raises nature without destroying it. Just as Bichat concludes boldly: " *Life is Death* ": since life must dissolve, and continually eliminate the elements of death, so also the Christian moralist must conclude that " the Christian life is a death to self."

Nevertheless all this is only the negative side of life, and as Claude Bernard[2] observed, " *To live is to create; life is a continual creation.*" Thus the Christian ascetic must also add, " Christian life is the continual creation of divine grace in our souls." It is, S Paul tells us, a painful birth of the life of God in us until Christ should be completely formed therein: *Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis* (Galat. iv, 19).

As the Christian life springs from death of self and love of sacrifice, so that these two elements are indissolubly united the one to the other, let us reject those false prophets who would try to separate them, and give us " short cuts," or " quick ways," or " simplified interior lives," to free us more or less from that sacrifice, which is indispensable to love. It is true that this rule of sacrifice puts self-love

[1] Bichat, *Recherches sur la vie et la mort*, p. 2 *et seq.*
[2] Claude Bernard, *Science expérimentale*, p. 52, 129, 198.

well on one side, but Christ tells us to enter by the narrow door: *intrate per angustam portam,* and be afraid to walk along the broad road, because the broad road, or the spacious way, is that which leads to damnation, and many there are who go there. And again: the gate which leads to life is narrow, and few there be that find it. *Quam angusta porta, et arcta via est, quae ducit ad vitam, et pauci sunt qui inveniunt eam* (Matt. vii, 14). There are many called to the perfect life, but few are chosen: *multi vocati, pauci vero electi* (Matt. xx, 16), and this is a fresh reason why we should understand still better the value of so rare a treasure as the very life of God in our souls.

PART III

PART III

Supernatural Helps. The Grace of God

THE first part of this study, upon the nature of Christian perfection, may have caused us to fear that this ideal is too high for us, and beyond our strength. The second part, upon the obstacles to be overcome, which are formidable—we have not concealed the fact—stresses still further the difficulties of the undertaking, and might finish by discouraging us. But we hasten to add, as a counterbalance on the other side, all the force of supernatural help which God in his all-powerful goodness has prepared for us, and which assures final victory and peace to all those of goodwill: *pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis!*

This generous goodwill is amply sufficient for all those souls who allow themselves to be arrayed and strengthened by this *invisible armour* of divine grace. With it, and through it, we can do all things, according to the words of the great apostle, who, after having confessed his nothingness and natural poverty, dared to cry: *omnia possum in eo qui me confortat!* (Philip. iv, 13).[1]

In order never to yield to this discouraging thought, that Christian perfection is too high for us, and the difficulties beyond our strength, we must place before our minds at the outset the marvellous armour of the grace of God, and analyse in detail the smallest parts of this all-powerful supernatural organism which clothes our souls at baptism, and which we forget too often to use—even if we have ever learnt to use it at all.

[1] The grace of God is efficacious by itself and does not depend on our consent, as is shown by the words of S Paul, so strongly commented on by S Thomas: "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish" (Philip. ii, 13). But the *method* of this divine working which moves us while respecting man's freewill is a mystery, the explanation of which varies with the different schools of thought. We are of opinion that it is beside the point here to discuss theoretical questions of controversy which are not interesting from a practical point of view.

Our plan in such a complex subject will be as follows:

In a first chapter, upon the Grace of God, we will first study *Actual Grace* which raises and moves the soul's faculties, in order to enable them to produce supernatural acts; then the quality which raises the substance of the soul, *Habitual Grace*, with its retinue of *infused virtues*, and *Gifts* of the Holy Spirit, the indispensable complement of our supernatural state, as well as the *fruits and beatitudes* which flow from the perfect exercise of *virtues* and *gifts*. From this doctrine, we will draw two corollaries of the highest practical importance: the one upon the varied and unequal *distribution* of God's gifts; the other upon docility to the *guidance of the Holy Spirit*.

In a second chapter, upon the Channels of Grace, which bring it into our souls, we will establish that they are summed up in our *incorporation* with Christ by *prayer* and the *sacraments*.

But since the Grace of God in our souls can be lost, in a third and last chapter upon the Restoration of Grace, we shall study the great misfortune of losing Grace and *its recovery* through Repentance.

CHAPTER I

The Grace of God

GRACE, in its widest sense, is the supernatural help of God, in order to aid us to attain our last end, which is the beatific vision in heaven. In the purely natural order we need God's co-operation in order to continue existing and living, a co-operation which causes our faculties, vegetative, sensitive and intellectual, to pass from potentiality to act.[1] In the supernatural order, we also need the co-operation of Grace to raise us from original sin, to heal our wounds, to strengthen our courage in the struggle against evil and in the practice of virtue, and to merit heaven.

But this help of God takes many forms, which we must carefully distinguish, notably *Actual Grace* and *Habitual* or *Sanctifying Grace*, of which we will treat separately.

ARTICLE I

Actual Grace

Actual Grace has been defined by theologians: "*A transitory help which God gives to our intelligence and our will, either to avoid evil or in order to do supernatural actions meriting heaven.*" Therefore, this help is not a permanent quality but a transient motion upon our faculties, and this motion is not only moral, but even physical.

Sometimes this help gives an impetus to our faculties through a *preventing* grace, sometimes it accompanies their natural play by a *helping*, adjuvant, or co-operative grace. Thus the thought comes to me to make an act of love of God without having done anything of myself to suggest it: that is a *preventing* grace; or perhaps it will help me to accomplish generously a given act of penance: that is a *helping*, adjuvant, or co-operative grace.

[1] See the Author's *Cours de Philosophie*, Bk. ii; *Théodicée*, No. 119 *et seq.*; *Etudes Philosophiq.*, Bk. vii, p. 484 *et seq.*

More usually grace is co-operative[1], or *working with us*, and expressly requires our active co-operation: these ways are called active or ascetic. But sometimes the grace of God will *work alone*. It then takes possession of the soul upon which it works at will—at least at certain moments, usually of very short duration—not at all demanding a positive co-operation, which would be more often than not beyond its powers, but only its consent and docility in keeping still, and not on any account hindering the grace of God. This soul is then raised to extraordinary or *passive* paths, called mystic in the strictest sense.

Theologically speaking, THE NECESSITY OF ACTUAL GRACE is beyond doubt. It is the formal teaching of our Lord: *Sine me nihil potestis facere* (Jo. xv, 5).[2]

It is of faith that man, by his own natural strength, and without God's help, is powerless to avoid all evil, and to do all good, that is to say, powerless to obey the natural law promulgated by his conscience, and to attain his end. The help of actual grace is indispensable to him.

This does not mean that he can never do any good actions without supernatural grace, nor that all the deeds of unbelievers who have not the Faith, are sins. That is an exaggeration which the Church has equally condemned. The Council of Trent (Sess. vi, Can. vii) expressly condemned those who held that all actions done before justification are necessarily bad and sinful. And since the Council, Pius V, Gregory XIII, Urban VIII, and Clement XI, in his famous Bull *Unigenitus*, have repeated the same condemnations against Baius and Quesnel for restating these and similar errors. The actions of unbelievers, or of sinners, not in a state of Grace, are not sins, and they can pave the way to justification and divine grace, but without ever meriting it, in the strict sense of the word, for grace is essentially gratuitous according to the words of S Paul, "And if by grace, it is not now by works; otherwise grace is no more

[1] *Co-operative* grace is explained in various ways by various schools of theological thought. We omit these purely theoretical controversial questions which have no great influence on practical conclusions.

[2] Cp. S Thomas, 1a 2æ, Q. 109-114; *C. Gent.*, c. 148-164; Salmanticenses, *De Gratia Dei*; Perrone, *De Gratia*; Satolli, *De Gratia*; Newman, *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*; Terrien, *La Grâce et la Gloire* (Paris, 1897); Tanquerey, *De Gratia*.

grace: *Si autem gratia, jam non ex operibus: alioquin gratia jam non est gratia* (Rom. xi, 6). (Cf. S Thomas, 1a 2æ, Q. 111.)

Even without actual grace man could do some moral good in the natural order. For example, he could resist the less violent temptations, obey the natural law, at least in its less difficult precepts, and even love God as the Author of Nature, at least with a weak and imperfect love.

In fact, it is further of faith that, through original sin, man has not completely lost his power of free-will. It is not utterly extinct or destroyed, but only weakened and dimmed.[1]

Nevertheless, the very limited good that fallen man can still do, naturally and without the co-operation of grace, is only good of a natural order, visualising only an end and a beatitude of a natural kind ; it has no reference to the supernatural end to which the Redemption of our Saviour has raised us, which is none other than the beatific vision of God face to face, a beatitude natural to God alone, but supernatural in angels and men, whom God has predestined to it by their elevation to the supernatural order.

In fact, there are two essentially different ways of knowing God : seeing him in himself, in his essence and as he is —*sicuti est*—or contemplating his reflection in earthly creatures. How inferior is the second way!

Is this really to know God, to know him as we do here on earth, indirectly and without seeing him, through inductive reasoning, and in the mirror of our incomplete and analogous conceptions of him ? Clearly not. From the contingent realities of the world we argue the existence of a creative source, without our having power to see it. By analogy we recognise that this first source is gifted with a certain intelligence and a certain will, though infinitely superior to ours. It is analogous to ours, though we cannot liken it to that of any man however great. And the smallness of our human conception masks the admirable synthetic unity of the divine Being from us. Assuredly it is much to know God thus in a natural manner, but the mystery remains. Here is, for example, *a work of art :* a picture, a statue, a symphony, a poem. To know the absent artist will it be sufficient to contemplate the masterpiece, to listen to and delight in the symphony ? Obviously not. I know with certainty that

[1] *Council of Trent,* Sess. VI, *De justificatione,* Canons v, vii, *et seq.*

this artist exists. I could guess his ability, the power or the nature of his genius; perhaps even I might have some inkling of his character, or of his temperament. But as long as I have not seen his face, contemplated his features, been in his presence, listened to his voice, and as long as I am ignorant of his inward life, his thoughts, his affections, in a word, his soul and his mind, I remain a stranger to this man, and I cannot truly say that I know him. To me he remains almost unknown.

In a profounder sense it is the same with the first Cause. As for the artist, I could at least say that he is another man as I am, of the same nature, whilst the first Cause, which is necessarily infinite, could not be of the same nature as created beings, contingent and finite, whose relative perfections are attributable to the first Cause only by analogy and without limitation.

Here the mystery is still greater, more unfathomable, and that is why the intelligence and heart of man cannot be satisfied and find perfect peace except through gratuitous elevation to the supernatural order, and to the beatific vision of God, according to those beautiful and well-known words of S Augustine: *Fecisti nos ad te, et irrequietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.*

Doubtless, some aspects of the mystery have been made clear to us by Revelation: faith has dispelled some of the shadows, but not entirely, and our vision of God remains always indirect, through a glass in a dark manner, according to the words of S Paul, *videmus nunc per speculum et in ænigmate*, provoking our souls to sigh yet more ardently after that intuitive and blessed vision in life eternal.

ARTICLE II

Habitual or Sanctifying Grace[1]

This elevation of the soul to the capacity of seeing God, and to the supernatural order, regularly operates through the Sacrament of Baptism, which infuses into it SANCTIFYING GRACE, justifying it or sanctifying it by the effacement of sin, whether original or personal, not by a purely exterior imputation, but by an interior transformation which

[1] S Thomas, 1a 2æ, Q. 110. Froget, O.P., *De l'habitation du S Esprit dans l'âme du juste*, iv pt.; Terrien, S.J., *La Grâce et la Gloire*, p. 75; Tanquerey, *Synopsis Theol. dog.*, t. III, n. 186-191.

renders the soul beautiful, holy, the friend of God, and even the adopted child of God, thanks to the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us explain the ESSENTIAL QUALITIES of this sanctifying grace.

Firstly, it is an INWARD GIFT of God to our souls. It is not a new substance superimposed, but a fresh power, a new principle of operation and higher life, so that it has been compared to the *soul of our soul*[1] and to the *life of our life*, because it informs the soul as our soul informs the body, when it infuses into it the threefold life, vegetative, sensible and intellectual. In like manner the informing of sanctifying grace within the soul endows it by participation with a higher, supernatural, and divine life.

It is a GIFT OF DEIFICATION which makes us like to Christ, and through Christ like to God. Thus Holy Writ fears not to tell us " Ye are gods—children of the Most High." *Dii estis, et filii Excelsi omnes* (Ps. lxxxi, 6). Admire the love of God, S John cries, which gives us not only the title but the reality of Children of God, *Videte qualem caritatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur et simus* (1 Jo. iii, 1); the divine Sonship which Jesus has by nature, we have by grace, *Dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri* (Jo. i, 12), and by the merits of Christ through whom we have received all: *De plenitudine ejus nos omnes accepimus* (Jo. i, 16). And the Apostle S Peter repeats: " by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature," *per haec efficiamini divinæ consortes naturæ* (2 Peter, i, 4). Most certainly here it is not a question of participation in the divine Substance, which is incommunicable, but only in the form or resemblance of the divine Life which grace imprints on our souls.

And this resemblance, the Apostle S John teaches us, consists in being capable of intuitively seeing God, face to face, as he sees and knows himself: *Similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est* (1 Jo. iii, 2). God alone, by virtue of his nature, is capable of thus knowing himself. Man only knows God through reasoning and abstraction, by tracing visible things to their invisible Cause. The Angels,

[1] Gratia . . . non potest esse quod sit substantia ant forma substantialis: sed est forma accidentalis ipsius animæ (1a 2æ, Q. 110, art. 2, ad 2). Sicut vita corporis anima, sic vita animæ Deus (S Augustine, *Enarrat. in psal.* lxx, sermo 80, n. 3, P.L. xxxvi, 893). This, then, is not merely a moral union, but physical or real, though we retain our own personality.

who have no physical organs with which to see the universe, see God in his effects directly imprinted in their minds; this is comparable remotely and partially to innate ideas; but they cannot see him in his essence.

The capacity to see God face to face is therefore a deification of the knowledge of man which transfigures his life, and reacts upon all his other faculties, both intellectual and moral. The spiritual life of man becomes thus a participation in the very life of God.

However, let us repeat this; there is no identity between the two lives, but only analogy and resemblance. And this participation in the Life of God is not merely ideal or moral, but physical and formal, for it is indeed the spirit of God himself, which, through grace, works and lives in man. "I live now not I," exclaims S Paul, "but Christ liveth in me": *vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (Galat. ii, 20).

The holy Fathers of the Church have invented a thousand striking comparisons in order to help us understand this deification of the human soul under the empire of divine Grace. As iron in the furnace, without ceasing to be iron or losing its nature, seems to become fiery and transform itself into fire; as crystal inundated with the sun's rays seems to become another source of light, and a miniature sun; so the human soul, transfigured by the grace of God and alive with the life of God, seems to become of the likeness of God and son of the Most High: *Dii estis et filii Excelsi omnes* (Ps. lxxxi, 6).

Grace is therefore a *supernatural gift,* far beyond the exigencies of human nature, and even all created nature. Let us explain.

Natural life is all that the Creator is bound to give his creature, granted he desired in his wisdom, justice and goodness, to create it; it is also all that the creature can obtain of itself, by its efforts or merits. Thus if God wills to create man, he must give him a body and soul, intelligence and will-power, a reasonable end, strength, and the necessary help in order to attain this end. All that is natural for man, who can do good or evil naturally, acquire natural merit and attain this natural end.

Beyond this, all the Creator's gifts will be gratuitous and supernatural. Therefore all that which surpasses the essence and the strength, the exigencies and merits of a given creature, is supernatural. Observe that we have said "*sur-*

passes" and not "*opposes*," because the supernatural enriches nature, without detracting from or diminishing it. It is not *against* but *above*, and coming from another superior order.

Now the supernatural is of TWO KINDS, *relative* or *absolute*. Thus, for example, infused knowledge is an endowment natural to the Angel, but to man it is beyond nature, or "*preternatural*." But participation in the nature of God is equally supernatural to man, angels, and all possible creatures. Here we touch the absolute supernatural, of which theologians can only quote three examples: the Incarnation, the Beatific Vision, and Miracles.

To sum up, grace is a GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP, making us friends of God. Friendship implies a certain parity or resemblance between two people, and, if necessary, produces it where it does not already exist, according to the words of S Jerome: *amicitia aut pares invenit aut pares facit*.[1] This is what takes place between God and the human soul through sanctifying grace. Becoming thereby capable of seeing and loving God, as he knows and loves himself, and therefore capable of living the divine life, the human soul becomes "of divine race," *divinæ consortes naturæ*, admitted henceforth to familiarity and friendship with God; friendship which we see among the saints develop into closest intimacy, and which at times, through the gift of miracles, renders them participators of his power.

If, then, Sanctifying Grace is a gift of friendship, it becomes thereby a GIFT OF UNION AND OF PRESENCE. Friendship suffers no separation; it desires to unite itself to the thing loved, not only by a moral union, a union of thought, but also, as far as is possible, by a physical union. Therefore God himself will come to live in the souls as in his temple through Sanctifying Grace, and he himself guarantees this in the holy Gospel. "If a man love me," he says, by the mouth of S John (xiv, 23), "we will come to him and make our abode with him." *Si quis diligit me, et Pater meus diligit eum et ad eum veniemus et apud eum mansionem faciemus*. Observe the plural, which comprises the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, although our Lord himself attributes the work of sanctification to the Holy Ghost.[2]

[1] S Jerome, in Mich. ii, 7.

[2] Et ego rogabo Patrem, et alium Paracletum dabit vobis, ut maneat vobiscum in æternum (Jo. xiv, 16).

God being omnipresent by the universality of his operation and essence, is present naturally in our souls. But by grace he is present there as Father and Friend, and there reveals his friendship to us. A fundamental truth of our holy religion which S Paul teaches the faithful: "Know ye not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you?" *An nescitis quoniam membra vestra templum sunt Spiritus Sancti?* (1 Cor. vi, 19). And with remarkable insistence he repeats to them, "Know you not that you are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" *Nescitis quia templum Dei estis, et Spiritus Dei habitat in vobis?* (1 Cor. iii, 16).

The last prayer of our Lord before his death, after the Last Supper, had precisely for its object that God, his Father, might grant to all his disciples the realisation of this ideal unity: *ut unum sint, ut et ipsi in nobis unum sint* (Jo. xvii, 21). It is the very ideal of Christian life and holiness. The *consciousness*, more or less full and luminous, of this presence and this physical union with the Divinity, which is treated of in mystical theology, is but an addition and expansion of it. Here it is sufficient to have a glimpse of the connection between these two orders of phenomena.

From all these characteristics of sanctifying grace we can draw this definition, which sums them up:

Sanctifying Grace, or the state of Grace, is an habitual state or quality, a quality which deifies the soul, so to speak, in its essence, and which God himself produces in the soul, by dwelling in it and making it capable of Godlike actions meriting the beatific vision.[1]

This definition excludes a double error: that of the "naturalists" of all centuries and present-day modernists, who deny, more or less openly, the supernatural; and that of the Protestants, Luther, Calvin, as well as Baïus and Jansenius, who under divers forms, profess that the supernatural state, far from being a free gift, was due to our nature, which is another way of denying the supernatural. We, on the contrary, with the teaching of the Catholic Church, affirm the existence of a truly supernatural or divine state, and its total gratuitousness, i.e. having no necessary relation to human nature.

[1] Cf. S Thomas, 2a 2æ, Q. 110, a. 1 ad 4.

ARTICLE III

The Infused Virtues

Sanctifying grace, by making us the friends and the children of God, has for its aim to make us live the divine life. Therefore, after having thus raised the very essence of our soul, it continues to enrich its powers or faculties, with a view to supernatural action, by the twofold adornment of *infused virtues* and *infused gifts*, of which we must explain the nature and the function, beginning with the INFUSED VIRTUES.

Let us note in the first place that it is a question here of Christian virtues, infinitely superior to the purely natural virtues of pagans. This transcendence is evident in the theological virtues, faith, hope, charity, which could not even have existed without Christian revelation. But it is not less manifest in the moral virtues. Faith has not by any means suppressed natural reason, but has raised and transfigured it, in offering it new truths, unknown before, and fresh unsuspected motives for exercising virtue. And as virtues are specified by their motive or formal object, one can say that the Christian moral virtues are specifically distinct from the same purely natural virtues of the philosophers.

For example, S Thomas quotes for us the virtue of temperance (1a 2æ, Q. 63, art. 4). For the heathen, the motive and the rule of temperance, he says, will be to avoid in his food, for example, that which is harmful to health, contrary to hygiene, or hindering the powers of reason; for the Christian the motive and divine rule will be, as S Paul says, " to chastise the body and bring it into subjection "—in order to prevent those revolts to which it is accustomed since the first Fall; or again the motive will be to imitate the suffering of our divine Saviour. Between these different motives for temperance, natural and supernatural, there is, as we see, an infinite difference.

In the second place let us note that every virtuous habit has two elements, of which one may be inborn, whilst the other cannot be. The FACILITY of repeating certain acts of virtue is always acquired, it develops by the repetition of the same acts, and cannot be existing from birth, even in the case of the infused virtues. In this sense, no one is born virtuous. On the other hand, the SPECIAL APTITUDE for

these same acts, which enriches with a new quality the radical power of the soul to produce them, can be inborn even in a whole family or in a race. There are families of artists, musicians, and the like, and one cannot deny the marvellous part played by heredity at times. It is in this wide sense that one can speak of virtues or aptitudes inborn, given by parents with natural life ; one can speak also of virtues given by God with the infusion of supernatural life by sanctifying grace. They are, if you like, virtues in germ, but these germs have all the necessary power, with God's help, to develop completely, even to an heroic degree, in the midst of the most terrible struggles of life.

In fact, it is through a *providential* as well as just and merciful *design*, that the human soul, even after having been redeemed and deified by the grace of Holy Baptism, has within it and around it perpetual struggle. It is right that, though raised to a throne and crowned with a supernatural diadem, the soul should not forget its humble origin; it should still experience this shameful concupiscence which is not sin but the remains of sin, a mark of bondage to the demon. This ceaselessly reminds it of its original misery, and hinders it from priding itself on the gifts of God, as if it had not received them from him gratuitously, by pure goodness and without any merit on its part.

The great Apostle S Paul, after having prayed God to deliver him from the burden of concupiscence, received the wise and well-known answer to his prayer : *sufficit tibi gratia mea* ; " My grace is sufficient for thee." With this divine help, the threefold concupiscence, far from being an evil, becomes precisely a source of merit and holiness, because it is the original source of humility.

All our faculties being inclined to evil by nature, since the Fall, all therefore are equally in need of being assisted and healed by the supernatural infusion of virtues opposed to these evil inclinations ; hence one understands the utility as well as the nature of this divine armour of infused virtues.

It will be useful to enumerate them, and describe them very briefly.

We will begin with the THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES, thus called because they have God as their direct object, and because they unite us directly to God ; they also are the noblest and

most indispensable of all the virtues. They are called *Faith, Hope,* and *Charity.*[1] Their chief effect is to draw man to God, as he manifests himself to us in revelation, and therefore to guide him towards his supernatural end, as far as he can know it and attain it on this earth, and merit thus to know God face to face, and to possess him in the eternal blessedness of heaven. Without these three theological virtues, it is impossible for man to do anything supernaturally good, and deserving of heaven. He can but dispose himself by a right and loyal conduct to receive this gift of God.

Now the *infused virtue of Faith* is that which inclines us to make an act of faith and disposes the mind and heart to bend with submission and respect to the Word of God, which cannot err or deceive us, and to believe in his revealed teaching, that is to say, to adhere firmly to it with mind and heart, without fear of being deceived.

The special difficulty which faith triumphs over, is that it makes us believe without having seen or understood, whereas our mind is inclined naturally to admit only that which it has seen or understood. Now it is clear that we can neither see nor understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity, for example. But we assent to it, however, and very reasonably, upon the authority of God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, since he is Truth itself. But such an act of faith on our part exacts moral dispositions of uprightness, humility, submission to God, and submission to his holy will, which are effects of the grace of God, by the infusion of the virtue of faith.

Unbelievers who are not baptised, and who, therefore, have not yet received the infused virtue of faith, could not then—without the help of actual grace—make a supernatural act of faith, either because they are ignorant of the fact of the revelation, or because, knowing it, they have not received the power to submit to the word of God. However, they can dispose themselves to receive this gift. Those who are lost cannot make this act of Faith. Even should they hold for certain the truths which God has revealed, this certainty of mind is not the effect of a supernatural sub-

[1] Definition of the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, c. vii). "In Justification man receives, along with remission of sins, the three virtues of faith, hope and charity, infused at the same time into his soul by Jesus Christ, on whom he is grafted."

mission to the word of God, since they detest his authority, though unable to resist it.

Thus, the devils believe, and tremble with hatred, *credunt et contremiscunt*, as says S James (Jas. ii, 19); but it is not a meritorious and supernatural act of faith. As Père Rousselot has well expressed it, their supernatural is "perverted," the contrary and reverse of that of the faithful.

Neither can formal heretics make a supernatural act of faith. Even when they adhere to a given point of revealed doctrine, the motive of this adhesion is not in fact respectful submission to the word of God, but adhesion to their own judgement, and to the power of their own minds.

However, sinners can, in spite of mortal sin and the loss of sanctifying grace, make a true act of faith. For not all mortal sin is a sin against faith, and they may keep more or less imperfectly the virtue of faith without that of charity, and, therefore, exercise it in a supernatural and meritorious manner, thanks to the transient and temporary co-operation of some actual grace.

To sin against faith and lose this infused virtue, it would be necessary to refuse to submit mind and heart to the word of God, through want of respect and reverence for the divine word, or of submission to the divine ruling of the Church. Now this refusal is always a very grave sin, because man has always sufficient grace to help him make with all his heart this act of humble submission to the word of God.

Together with the virtue of faith, chief of all virtues, there is infused the VIRTUE OF HOPE in the soul.

This virtue of hope has for its essence the drawing of our desires and aspirations to God, who is known to us in so far as faith reveals him to us, that is to say, as our last end, our sovereign good, and our eternal beatitude.

Hope would therefore be impossible without the previous virtue of faith; it is faith alone which can give to hope the object and motive upon which it must build.

The *object* of hope is God himself, intuitively known in himself and possessed eternally, and consequently its object is also the necessary means for attaining this supernatural end. All other goods, that are useful to this end, may be the secondary object of the virtue of hope, provided they remain subordinate to the first and chief object of this virtue, which is, as we have said, God himself.

In this second category are found the temporal goods of this life, in proportion as they are necessary to live well, and that is why we can legitimately hope and ask God for our daily bread, as our Lord has taught us in the "*Our Father.*" But it is clear that these are but secondary objects, and subordinate to that of our last end.

Similarly, just as faith gives us the object of our hope, it gives us also its *motive*, which is the all-powerful omnipotence of God and his faithfulness to all his promises. As we believe in him because he is Truth itself, so do we hope in him because he is entirely disposed to help us, and is absolutely faithful to his word.

The words of eternal promise fill the sacred scriptures, and we need not quote them here, except to observe that this eternal happiness is only promised to those who have deserved it by their courageous virtue, for it is written that the kingdom of God suffereth violence, and that only the violent can bear it away : *regnum Dei vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud* (Matt. xi, 12). So that the virtue of hope preserves us against two opposite excesses : presumption and despair :

Presumption, which hopes that God can and will save us without our concurrence and without our troubling to deserve it by a virtuous life :

Despair, which does God the injustice of not relying on the efficacious help of his grace, and refuses to ask for it, as if he were too far away to hear us, or failed in goodness or power to aid us. However great the difficulties which surround us may appear, however deep may be the abyss of our poverty and moral weakness, we never have cause to despair, and it is the infused virtue of hope which places that conviction deep in our hearts.

All the baptised faithful, having received this infused virtue, can always make acts of hope while here on earth. The blessed in heaven can do so no longer, because they already possess the promised happiness, and one can only hope for those things which are absent, and of which one is deprived.

The damned in hell have no longer anything of the virtue of hope. For them, eternal bliss has for ever become impossible. As for the souls in purgatory, the virtue of hope is clothed in another form, for being certain of their salvation, and being no longer able to gain merit henceforth,

they no longer have need to ask God's help in order to attain their blessed end, which they no longer fear to lose.

After the virtues of faith and hope, we must consider the VIRTUE OF CHARITY. Faith is only a starting-point, hope a step forward, but charity is the completion of all Christian life. There is no Christian life lived to its fullest extent without divine charity; it is the supernatural life of union with God. The infused virtue of charity is, therefore, that which draws us to love God, as well as all that God loves, and to live an intimate life with him.

Like all love, this virtue has ITS SEAT in the will or intellectual appetite, and secondarily in the heart or sensible appetite In the first case, love is given; in the other case, love is received and felt, according to the words of S Thomas: *Amor qui est in appetitu sensitivo, quædam passio est* (2a 2æ, Q. 27, a. 2). But love consists much more in loving than in being loved, as the holy Doctor of the Church has well said: *Charitati magis convenit amare quam amari* (2a 2æ, Q. 27, a. 1 and Q. 27, a. 2) for it is much more blessed to give than to receive: *beatius est magis dare quam accipere* (Acts xx, 35). From this has arisen among theologians the celebrated controversy as to whether purely intellectual love is sufficient without any affection, in the heart.[1] Some have held that it is sufficient to love God by obeying him and accomplishing his will in all its precepts, ruling out entirely the feelings of the heart. But such a love would be no longer human. Can one believe that a soul could serve God generously and continuously, without putting their heart into it, without ever feeling it beat and inflame towards a noble ideal? Of course, it does not always rest with us, and it is a gift from heaven, a magnificent gift which gives wings to our souls. For many it is the assured rampart of chastity, a source of splendid enthusiasm, a focus of heroic self-sacrifice. For all, it is an alleviation of sorrow, a facility for virtue. In a word, for all, the participation of this divine gift by the heart, at least in a certain degree, is practically indispensable. Also it is imposed on us by the first commandment of God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," says the Law, not only "with all thy will" in obeying him, but also "with all thy heart,"[2] that is to say, in obeying him

[1] See Billuart, *Tract. de charit.*, Diss. iv, a. 7.

[2] Deut. vi, 3; Matt. xxii, 37; Luke x, 25.

filially and clinging to him with true affection as a son to his father.

Doubtless it is natural to love sensitive creatures *more feelingly* than invisible beings; if a mother feels herself more tenderly moved in considering the cradle of her child than in contemplating the image of her Creator, God will not be offended, nor jealous, because there are two different orders of love, and the mind immediately rectifies this wrong focus, as it were, of the heart. But surely God could not permit us to offer only the mind and the will, while keeping back the heart, for he is the master of all, and as the heart is in us the most delicate of treasures, it is that which he is most anxious to have, and for which he expressly asks: *Fili mi, præbe cor tuum mihi* (Prov. xxiii, 26).

We shall see later an easy means of developing this affective piety, when we speak of affective prayer; let us content ourselves now with saying that the infused virtue of charity takes root in our heart at the same time as in our will.

As for the BEAUTY AND THE GREATNESS of this virtue of charity, it would suffice, to be enamoured of it, to listen to S Paul celebrating it in these enthusiastic terms: " Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing " (1 Cor. xiii, 1-4).

What is the reason? It is that God is Love or Charity: *Deus charitas est* (1 Jo. iv, 8); it is his essence, his life, and it is his law, because love is the first movement of the being towards the True, the Good and the Beautiful, and all elevation or deification of the soul which makes it like unto God is in the participation of charity: it is the distinctive sign of God's children, of those who, by adoption, have become sons of God. The moral summit of Christian sanctity or deification coincides with the highest summit of charity. This divine virtue, Holy Writ tells us, is the Alpha and Omega of Christian life. " Now

the end of the commandment," S Paul tells us (1 Tim. i, 5), " is charity out of a pure heart, and of good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

And he adds (Rom. xiii, 8) : " Owe no man anything but to love one another : for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." It is this thought that S Augustine expressed in the celebrated phrase : *Ama et fac quod vis*, " Love, and do what thou wilt,"[1] a saying both very profound and very true, for he who loves God truly must wish only to please him in all his actions : whatever he does is to please him.

That is why God has not only permitted himself to be loved, which would, it seems, have sufficed. But he has desired and commanded it, because he has wished to raise us to the supernatural order. In short, the EFFECT " PAR EXCELLENCE " of the virtue of charity is the intimate union of the loving soul with the Beloved, its God. " He that dwelleth in love," says S John, " dwelleth in God, and God in him " (1 John iv, 16). It is the entire Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, which comes to dwell in the soul, according to the words of S John : " If a man love me, we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." *Si quis diligit me, ad eum veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus* (Jo. xiv, 23). " That they all may be one," said our Lord in his last prayer for his apostles, " as thou, Father, in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us—that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John xvii, 21, 26).

As in the divine life, the Holy Ghost is the substantial love of the Father and Son, or their unity consummated in one and the same nature, so in the life of grace, the virtue of charity radiating on us from the Holy Spirit is the union (not substantial but accidental and by analogy), of the creature with its Creator.

Thus divine love gives the creature to God, at the same time that it gives God to the creature, since it is necessarily a reciprocal love.[2] Love joins one with the other, and keeps them so. The soul reposes in God, as God reposes in the soul, but it is a repose which is life, and continued creation. There, again, the august Trinity holds council—as on the day when man was first created—and repeats his project of re-creating

[1] S Augustine, *In epist. Joannis*, Tract. vii, 8, p. 223.
[2] S Thomas, 2a 2æ, Q. 25, a. 1.

man regenerate by baptism to his image and likeness: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram* (Gen. i, 26). But here, he asks co-operation: if he works out the progressive and laborious deification of a soul, he expects that the soul should co-operate in order to earn merit, because he will not again work alone, as in the first creation.

Charity, union with God, sanctity, are henceforth for us the three aspects, we may even say the three synonyms, for the one work of the deification of a soul, which consists, S Paul tells us, of being "followers of God, as dear children": *Estote imitatores Dei, sicut filii charissimi* (Eph. v, 1).

This union with God is so strong in the loving souls of the Saints, that it becomes in reality INDISSOLUBLE[1], as S Paul has proclaimed in such eloquent terms. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii, 35, 39). It is the reciprocity of love from God which henceforward keeps the soul faithful, as if chained and captive in the bonds of holy love, although it is God who has loved us first: *Quoniam ipse prior dilexit nos* (1 Jo. iv, 10); so also it is God who has the last word, for we cannot prevent this blessed love from being the honour and glory of our being, the perfection, peace, and joy of our soul, in a word the prelude of that beatitude which our heart is seeking and without which it cannot be satisfied: *irrequietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.*

We cannot refuse this reciprocity of God's love, because it is God's glory to requite our love, and we cannot wish it unrequited. If he did not requite it royally, his perfection would appear less dazzling to our eyes, and it is impossible that the divine perfections should not have all conceivable splendour.

But it is preferable that this promised, hoped-for reward, which cannot fail us, should not be the predominant motive,

[1] However no man is ever free from sin all at once, or incapable of growth in holiness. This exaggeration has frequently been condemned by the Church, notably in the case of the *Beghards* (see Denzinger-Bannwart, no. 471), and with regard to *Molinos* (Denzinger-Bannwart, nos. 1221 *et seq.*)

nor yet the motive at all, which excites our love or decides our actions. *Perfect love* forgets our own happiness without ever excluding it. Neither must we, nor can we refuse it, since God himself is our last end, and our beatitude. It is impossible for man not to desire these things ; such would be unnatural and inhuman.

It is evident how wrong it would be to renounce positively one's own salvation, under pretext of God's glory, and how one should carefully dispel such imprudent exaggerations and errors. Even though qualified by hypothetical conditions which one knows to be impossible—"*if God wished it—or permitted it*"—these desires are exaggerated and dangerous, and the wise director should always prudently ward them off, in spite of the good and generous intentions which inspire them—unless they arise from a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

After the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, which unite the soul, regenerated by baptism, directly to God, sanctifying grace enriches our faculties with other infused virtues which concern the creature's use and which are divided into two groups : the intellectual virtues and the moral virtues.

The INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES, about which very little is said in ascetic treatises, are, however, of the greatest value, since it is the intelligence which enlightens and directs action. How many imprudent or wrong actions are done because the mind is ignorant or accidentally warped! It is of importance, therefore, for the rectitude of a moral life, that the mind should be upright and strengthened by the intellectual virtues. For we shall see in the following article, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit : *understanding, wisdom* and *knowledge,* which co-operate most in contemplation, whether active or passive, perfect the intellectual virtues. An ascetical treatise should not, therefore, pass them over in silence.

They amount to three : the virtues of INTELLIGENCE, WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE ; to which is added the practical virtue of PRUDENCE.

Simple apprehension of truth is unique of its kind. It is this which is fortified by the virtue of understanding.

The act of judgement is threefold, according as one relies upon human reason, or divine reason, or applies these

judgements to concrete cases. With these three acts respectively the virtues of knowledge, wisdom and prudence are concerned.

The virtue of prudence holds a middle place between the purely intellectual virtues and the moral virtues, because it is not speculative but eminently practical; also we find it at the head of the FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES of the moral life—*prudence*, *justice*, *fortitude*, and *temperance*: prudence which enlightens the mind, justice which straightens the will, fortitude and temperance which moderate the sensible appetites.

Let us very briefly pass them in review.

First, PRUDENCE, which regulates the form, measure, and opportunity of all our acts, and which consequently is a master or universal virtue.

It has been said that it chiefly regulates authority in commanding oneself or others, whether members of the family, or members of society, ecclesiastical, civil, or military. However, it also regulates obedience to commands. Obedience as well as authority can sin, either through default of prudence, lack of reflection, precipitation, inconstancy, and negligence, or by excessive application and solicitude, such as scrupulosity, contention of mind, or by some vice in the object desired, or the means employed, such as cunning, deceit, and fraud.

We see by this that prudence is a principle of moral action, which perfects the practical reason of man, in order that, in each of his actions, he may know how to subordinate secondary ends to the last end, and apply the means best adapted to those ends in given circumstances.

This moral virtue then commands all others, which cannot exist without it, at least in a perfect degree, even as prudence itself cannot exist without the other virtues, for it cannot work upon nothing.

After prudence, which occupies a place apart in the order of cardinal virtues, the most important is certainly the VIRTUE OF JUSTICE, the object of which is to bring about harmony of relations between men based on respect of persons and property; that is to say, it respects the rights of each person, whether natural rights, or positive rights proceeding from free conventions or laws imposed by superior authority.

Thus the virtue of justice tends to strengthen man's will,

which only too often induces him to violate the rights of others, and to respect neither public nor private property.

To this virtue are added the VIRTUES ANNEXED TO JUSTICE which are derived from it, while being quite distinct.

Whilst justice properly so called has for its object to give to others in perfect equity that which is rigorously due, the annexed virtues induce us to pay debts which, considering their extent, are literally unpayable, or else to perform purely moral obligations, which are not settled before tribunals, and which are left to the virtuous impulse of each man.

Among the first S Thomas places the *virtue of Religion* towards God, a sacred debt, and one which will always be impossible for us to pay entirely; *piety* towards relations and towards our fatherland; respect and *observance* towards superiors.

Among the other sort, he places *gratitude* or recognition of the benefits of a particular order which we may have received from someone; *vengeance* which does not allow crime to go unpunished; *veracity* which makes us avoid lying, simulation, hypocrisy, and prompts us to be always sincere in our words and actions; *friendship*, or that good fellowship which is the finest social virtue; *liberality*, which avoids equally covetousness and prodigality, and makes each citizen combine for the good of all.

According to S Thomas, there are nine virtues subsidiary to justice. There is, however, yet another, more general, which he calls *natural equity*, or *epieikeia*. In a given case where all laws and customs seem equivocal, or inapplicable, natural equity makes good by a wise interpretation, which safeguards all interests by the light of a superior justice; it is perhaps the most important and most precious of all practical virtues in the order of social good.

After justice, the third of the cardinal virtues is FORTITUDE. The virtue of fortitude is that perfection of the sensitive part of the soul which gives us courage to resist fear, and to moderate excessively bold impulses which might deflect us from the path of duty.

The most heroic act of this virtue of fortitude is martyrdom. The virtue of fortitude restrains us from two excesses: fear and cowardice in face of peril, and temerity in face of all rules of prudence.

The VIRTUES SUBSIDIARY TO FORTITUDE which imitate it in matters less difficult, are on the one hand *magnanimity* which

does not recoil before arduous undertakings, whilst keeping free from presumption, ambition and vainglory. On the other hand, there are *patience* and *perseverance*, which resist discouragement at initial difficulties, and go peacefully and firmly right to the end of their task.

Finally, the fourth and last of the cardinal virtues is TEMPERANCE, which moderates within reasonable limits the need of pleasure and enjoyment which the sensitive and affective part of our being experiences, notably in the pleasures of the table and marriage.

Abstinence and fasting restrain gluttony, sobriety is opposed to inebriety. Chastity wages war against impurity, and finds its perfection and crown in virginity.

The SUBSIDIARY VIRTUES OF TEMPERANCE are chiefly: 1st, *continence*, which enables the virtuous man to contain himself or to contain the violence of all his passions, so as not to allow his reason to be darkened and weakened; 2nd, *clemency* and *meekness*, which restrain anger, and moderate punishment; 3rd, *modesty* and *humility*, which restrain and moderate the feeling of our own excellence, and the desire to shine. Humility depends also on the virtue of justice and the love of truth, for it is at root but a question of strict truth, to know that we have nothing of ourselves but sin, and that God is all.

Such is, according to S Thomas, the synthesis of the intellectual and moral virtues which sanctifying grace infuses as a germ into souls regenerated by Holy Baptism, together with the three theological virtues. We must leave the more complete study of these to moral theology.

ARTICLE IV

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit[1]

Sanctifying grace and the infused virtues are not the only things necessary for the full development of the divine life to which God destines us. The supernatural life is perfected by the *gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Let us explain this doctrine.

Reason alone does not suffice even for the life of nature. Let us give an ordinary example. While walking, the

[1] See John of S Thomas, *Cursus theol.*, in 1am 2æ; Card. Billot, *de Virtutibus infusis*, th. viii, 1; Gardeil, O.P., *Diction. de théol.*; *Les dons du S Esprit dans les Saints dominicains.*

traveller makes a false step, and stumbles: immediately, his instinct of balance, by an appropriate movement, re-establishes equilibrium and avoids an accident, without waiting for the intervention of reason. Deliberation would have come too late, and would have been, moreover, quite incapable of indicating the appropriate remedy for the trouble, for example, pointing out to the motor nerves where the nervous fluid should go, to give help and to restore equilibrium. In like manner, in our sickness the instinct of nature often forestalls medical science. She is our first and best doctor, according to the celebrated adage *Natura morborum optima medicatrix.*

Likewise in the spiritual life an analogous need makes itself felt: SUPERNATURAL INSTINCTS are necessary to us, in order to direct and protect this new life, when the direction of reason, always so short and so slow, even when enlightened by faith, would be entirely insufficient.

It is this indispensable assistance which the infused gifts of the Holy Spirit bring to the infused virtues. The virtues, as S Thomas teaches us, direct life by a reasoning process, and therefore in a human manner, *humano modo;* the gifts, like superior and divine instincts, infused into our souls with Holy Baptism, direct it without the need of reasonings or searching, but by an inspiration from on high, *modo divino supra humanum modum.*[1]

Consequently actions accomplished under the inspiration of these superior instincts are said to be passive rather than active: *In donis Spiritus sancti, mens humana non se habet ut movens, sed magis ut mota* (2a 2æ, Q. 52, a. 2). But it is not merely a question of acquiescence given in a *purely passive state,* as happens in mystical states in *the strictest sense;* there are also *vital and meritorious acts,* coming entirely from God as the first cause, but also from man as a secondary cause.

Therefore these gifts do not produce acts which are necessarily different from the virtues, but they have a special motive or a different *rule of action.* The gifts are ruled no longer by reason enlightened by faith, as in the

[1] Per virtutes theologicas et morales non ita perficitur homo, in ordine ad ultimum finem, quin semper indigeat moveri *quodam superiori instinctu Spiritus Sancti* (1a 2æ, Q. 68, a. 2, ad 2); Dona a virtutibus distinguuntur in hoc quod virtutes perficiunt ad actus *modo humano,* sed dona *ultra humanum modum* (III, dist. 34, Q. 1, a. 1, c.).

exercise of the virtues, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is a specifically different rule; it is for that reason that the gifts are superior to the virtues, since they come from on high to their help, to aid, raise, and if necessary, to replace them.[1]

It is therefore a grave error to think that these gifts are only given to us for the accomplishment of the more difficult or heroic actions, for they come to our help in all degrees of Christian life, whether we are beginners, progressing, or have attained perfection.

Another error is to make them the exclusive privilege of the mystical contemplatives, for they are the common property of all God's children who are docile to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, according to the teaching of S Paul: *Quicumque Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei* (Rom. vii, 14). Thus, martyrs can have the gifts of fortitude and prudence without those of contemplation, and contemplatives themselves have very different degrees and ways of contemplation, although they are the radiance from the same divine charity.[2] Consequently contemplation is not the only normal way of sanctity, it is only the most usual way, which allows of many exceptions, according to God's good pleasure.

From this proceeds the definition of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: *They are habits or habitual and permanent dispositions, necessary to salvation and sanctity, which are infused with sanctifying grace into the powers of the soul, to render them docile, pliable, and prompt under the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in the exercise of all virtues, and to make us practise them in a more excellent way without reasoning, as by a divine influence.* Finally, *the gifts are linked with charity, and increase with it.* Such is the doctrine of S Thomas.

As all our readers know, there are seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which the Prophet Isaias enumerates thus:

[1] Dona dantur in adjutorium virtutum (S Thomas, in Isa., c. 9). The gift of *Fortitude*, for example, is not distinguished from the virtue of fortitude by its greatest intensity, but by an explicit motive, different and supernatural, an inspiration from on high.

[2] The same gift can have not only *degrees*, but different *modes*; for example, the one ordinary, the other extraordinary: *Nihil prohibet unum actum a diversis habitibus informari, et secundum hoc ad diversas species reduci* (1a 2æ, Q. 18, a. 6, 7, and a. 2.) See also *Mystical Phenomena*, p. 98.

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and *Fear of the Lord.*[1]

In order to explain them we will divide them into two groups : the four which help the intellectual virtues, and are therefore the noblest : *understanding, wisdom, knowledge* and *counsel;* and the three which help the moral virtues, and which are of lesser dignity : *piety, fortitude* and *fear of the Lord.* In our enumeration we will follow the inverse, ascending order, which is that of the progressive development and genesis of the gifts, beginning with the most imperfect, the gift of holy fear.

I. The gift of fear (2a 2æ, Q. 19, a. 9 and 11). According to our holy Books, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom : *Initium sapientiæ timor Domini* (Eccli. i, 16 ; Ps. cx, 10). And S Bernard does not hesitate to call it " the lowest of the steps we must mount." However, the fear which comes from God has nothing either low or servile about it ; it is simply lower as the foundation of a building. This fear is not terror and has nothing in common with terror. The first is the product of Faith ; the second of Sin. The first is a filial respect for the sovereign Majesty of God, our Father, which dreads all that displeases him and separates us from him ; the second is the feeling of a slave in the presence of a detested master whose punishment he dreads. The first does not trouble the heart's peace, but increases it, inspiring us with humility and confidence ; the second, on the contrary, disturbs, troubles, and agitates us, and inspires us with revolt and humiliated pride. The first will continue in Heaven itself, where we shall see the holy angels, prostrate before the throne of the Lamb, humbly proclaiming his holiness in their eternal canticle " *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.*" The second will be cast to the depths of Hell, where demons tremble, not out of reverence, but out of hatred : *Credunt et contremiscunt* (Jas. ii, 19).

In this democratic age, that which is most lacking in the souls one would lead to God or raise to perfection, is that innate feeling of respect for all legitimate authority, even

[1] Spiritus sapientiæ et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiæ et pietatis, et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini (Isaias xi, 2, 3). See John of S Thomas, *Cursus* th., in 1am 2æ ; and Card. Billot, *De virtutib. infusis*, t. viii, 1.

for the authority of God, the source of all authority. This is that reverential fear which in the ages of Faith gave our fathers a profound and sincere submission in the presence of the sovereign Majesty of God Almighty, that humility which included the hatred of evil and sin, while excluding all servile dread.

This sentiment is so much at the root of all Christian life that Saint Teresa used to return to it ceaselessly, with a persistence which astonishes us, even when instructing most perfect daughters, after the example of S Paul, who, descended from the third Heaven, and full of the merits of a prodigious apostleship, yet feared to be unworthy of the reward of Heaven: *Ne forte, cum aliis praedicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar* (1 Cor. ix, 27).

As long as we remain on this earth, in our fragile bodies, let us not have the presumption to try to do without this filial fear, so that after having been the prelude to pure love, it may be still its protection and shield even in the state of highest perfection. The rule of S Teresa is that of the most elementary humility.

The MORAL VIRTUE which is directly strengthened by the gift of fear is *temperance*, and its companion virtues (continence, chastity, modesty). The more imperious and brutal are the hurtful vices of pride, luxury and greed, the more they need the spur of fear to master them. Fear, in fact, adds a fresh motive to temperance. Whilst the one urges us to avoid dishonest pleasures in order to conserve the real dignity and integrity of our reason, as well as our dignity as Christians and as members of Jesus Christ, the other tends towards the same aim in order not to separate us from God. And this same fear can also urge us to perfect renouncement which is the protecting rampart of virtue, according to the words of S Paul: "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." (2 Cor. iv, 10).

Indirectly, the fear of God also strengthens the theological virtue of *Hope*. It is as it were the reverse of hope, which it reflects, for it conspires to the same end. Although it may be less perfect to fear than to hope, the sentiment is the same at its root, under a double aspect.

Finally, fear initiates *love*. We begin, in fact, to taste God, when we begin to obey him through fear. His yoke soon appears, by experience, to be sweet and pleasant.

Jugum meum suave est et onus meum leve (Matt. xi, 30), and it is this taste of God which quickly renders the fear of God loving and filial. It then inspires us with repulsion for everything which might wound the heart of so good a Master, and an ardent desire to please him. Thus we understand, after having experienced it, how true to the letter are these words of our holy writings, which at first seem a paradox: *Initium sapientiæ timor Domini*: Fear is the beginning of Love.

The development of the gift of fear in our hearts has THREE DEGREES, according as its movement draws us to flee mortal sin, venial sin, and, lastly, the slightest imperfection.

II. THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE (2a 2æ, Q. 139). This gift is above that of fear, because fear is a passive and inferior sentiment, whilst fortitude is active and dominating; thus we call it more noble. However, the former can suffice to rouse the latter in a generous soul.

There is a great analogy between the *gift* of fortitude and the *virtue* of fortitude, about which we have already spoken. However, the distinction between them is profound, since all the virtues have a *human way of acting*, as we have explained, whilst the *gifts* have a *divine or superhuman way*. A new element is therefore here introduced; it is God who works in us, through a divine instinct; so the gift is capable of a generosity and perfection which the virtue alone cannot have.

The gift of fortitude then adds to the virtue of the same name something superhuman, especially in the face of perils and evils over which we cannot triumph of ourselves, such as death itself, which comprises them all. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to help us endure death, and even to render it agreeable. That is the most sublime triumph of Christian courage.

It was by this gift of fortitude that our Lord overcame the fear of terrible pain during his Agony in the Garden of Olives. Raising himself suddenly, inflamed with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the world, he said to his disciples, "Arise, let us go: he is at hand that will betray me." *Surgite, eamus, ecce appropinquavit qui me tradet* (Matt. xxvi, 46). And there is the example of S Andrew, saluting lovingly the cross on which he was about

to be hung, after the manner of his divine Master, " O good cross," he cries at the sight of it—"Cross, source of all good, cross which I have so long desired, and loved so passionately, behold, my wishes are granted!" And when the crowd, moved at this spectacle, would have saved him from the fury of the proconsul, S Andrew besought them to do nothing. Such is the sublime virtue of the gift of fortitude.

These examples are sufficient to explain the DOUBLE PART played by this divine gift, both to make us endure overwhelming troubles for God, and to inspire us to undertake great works for his glory. In these two movements of divine life, acting and suffering, it displays that superhuman effort which imbues great characters, the souls who are the honour and glory of Holy Church. All her long history is but one moving panegyric of the gift of fortitude.

Its THREE DEGREES are: firstly, victory over sin; then victory over tepidity and mediocrity; finally, triumph in the folly of the Cross, which caused S Paul to cry: " who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for his body, which is the Church." (Col. i, 24.)

III. THE GIFT OF PIETY (2a 2æ, Q. 121). Piety comes expressly to moderate and soften whatever hardness or severity there might be in fortitude and fear, by adding a new element to them, so sweet that it penetrates the heart—that of *filial piety*, or tenderness towards our heavenly Father.

This gift of piety differs essentially from the virtue of the same name. That, of which we have already spoken, is a subordinate part of the virtue of justice, and has for its motive rendering to God what belongs to him in all justice, as our Creator and Sovereign Master.

In that there is nothing beyond what is human and deduced from natural reason. But, by the gift of piety, we enter into a divine sphere by fulfilling a new rôle, that of children of God, in which, with a sublime inspiration, we dare address God by the name of Father, according to these profound words of S Paul: " You have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba, Father " (Rom. viii, 15). And the apostle adds: "The Spirit himself asketh for us, with unspeakable groanings: *Ipse Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus* (Rom. viii, 26).

This gift of piety gives our souls lively sentiments of tenderness, confidence, and love for God, with a generous resolution to accept all which it may please him not only to order, but even to desire. Moreover, our piety towards God extends and reflects on all that God loves: it will inspire love for all the saints who people heaven, compassionate solicitude for all the souls in purgatory, and upon earth, tender charity for all men who are our brothers, children of the same heavenly Father, and members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ our elder Brother, *primogenitus ex mortuis* (Col. i, 18), *primogenitus in multis fratribus* (Rom. viii, 29). Thus enlarged, our piety becomes useful to all: *pietas ad omnia utilis est* (1 Tim. iv, 8).

This sentiment of piety gives us a childlike spirit towards our superiors, and if they are priests, a confident docility; a spirit of sweet fatherliness towards our inferiors; a brotherly spirit towards our equals. It moves our heart to compassion for all those who are suffering or in need, leads us to weep with those who weep, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to support without bitterness the shortcomings of the faulty, and to make ourselves all things to all men in order to win them all, following the example of S Paul: *Omnibus omnia factus sum ut omnes facerem salvos* (1 Cor. ix, 22).

The gift of piety thus places the most perfect seal on the *virtues* of religion, justice and charity, and on the exterior relations which men must have, whether between themselves or with all the members of the great Christian family, in heaven, in purgatory, and upon earth. If it were obeyed perfectly, the Communion of Saints would be perfect, and men would live in peace on earth, united among themselves as the elect are in heaven.

As in the case of the preceding ones, this gift has THREE DEGREES: *in the service of God* our devotion may be exercised only to the limit of what is necessary to salvation—or it may be more generous—or it may even be limitless. In *the service of our brethren*, our devotion may give only of our superfluity—or a part of what is necessary—or it may even urge us to *give ourselves* entirely.

IV. THE GIFT OF COUNSEL.—The three preceding gifts perfect the moral virtue of the will and the heart; the four following ones appeal to the intelligence in order

to fortify it and raise it by divine instincts. This is the superior rôle which the gift of Counsel is the first to play, by perfecting prudence, that virtue midway between knowledge and action.

Human knowledge, even enlightened by the light of faith, is nearly always lacking somewhere, and is insufficient to guide our conduct, especially in the three following cases :

1. Firstly, when theory has to pass to practice—recognised principles to their wise application. It is not much to know that a certain thing is good in itself. All that is good is not always opportune, and the best things are sometimes gravely inconvenient. Now it is the gift of counsel which shows us clearly what must be done or avoided, when to speak and when to be silent, in given circumstances. It inspires us how to set about things in order to succeed in doing well, how to choose the most favourable times and moments calmly, without precipitation or dilatoriness. The need of this gift is then apparent in this first case.

2. Even after the most mature deliberation our previsions may remain uncertain, timid, and hesitating, especially when they concern supernatural conduct and the discernment of spirits. Then is the moment to have recourse to prayer, and to invoke this gift of the Holy Spirit to deliver us from our doubts : *Veni Sancte Spiritus!*

3. Finally, there is the case of interior aridity, when it seems to a soul that all its knowledge and prudence have been taken from it. It is no longer conscious of God, of his grace, and consolation, and of the things it knew before. All has been taken from it and hidden, so that it no longer knows which way to turn. This trial, although so painful, is extremely useful in order to convince the soul of its nothingness and of its deep need of God's help and inspiration : *Loquere Domine, quia audit servus tuus* (1 Kings iii, 9).

The gift of counsel, then, is a supernatural infused disposition, which renders our practical reason prompt and docile to receive guidance from on high in searching of what we must say or do, in delicate or complex circumstances, so as to avoid alike precipitation and dilatoriness, rashness and timidity, stubbornness and inconstancy, in a word, all the vices opposed to Christian prudence.

We might also find THREE possible DEGREES in the development of this gift, according as it makes us know and follow with certainty the will of God, whether in things

of precept and of strict obligation, in matters of evangelical counsel, or finally, in extraordinary works of the most heroic perfection.

V. The Gift of Knowledge concerns the knowledge of creatures by the light of God and the truths of Faith. It shows us things in their true light, despoiling of their deceiving charms all the good things of this world, such as riches, honours, and pleasures, making us feel clearly their vanity, their depravity, and how incapable they are of satisfying hearts created for God, and how unworthy of the nobility of God's children.

This divine knowledge also teaches us to know ourselves, with all our wretchedness and infirmities: it reveals to us blemishes and imperfections which we did not even suspect, and keeps us in our place, which is in humility.

Finally, this knowledge from on high makes us understand that creatures, far from turning us away from God, should on the contrary serve as ladders by which we mount up to him, since they are all the likeness, in divers degrees, of his goodness and wisdom: *Omnis creatura scala est ad Deum.* By the light of this knowledge, all creatures appear to us as messengers from God, and speak of him to us. It is he whom we discover in them, always and everywhere. It is a kind of spontaneous intuition of the symbolism of Nature which enchanted S Francis of Assisi and all the hermit saints. When he asked one of them if he were not wearied without books in the desert, he received the reply: "With the book of Nature, the greatest and most beautiful of all books, one is never weary." To know how to read it is everything, and the gift of knowledge teaches us the secret.

Under the empire of this gift, the faithful soul does less by reasoning than by instinctive judgements, and conclusions. He feels, rather than deduces, the truth of his conclusions. It is like a communication of knowledge from the Holy Spirit. Nothing is more frequent among the saints, and of the pious faithful—even though they are ignorant in the world's eyes—nothing is more astonishing than this sense of the divine which makes them speak with rapture of Nature's marvels, or the marvels of Grace. Without ever having made scientific studies, they often judge better than the most learned, who are astounded at the aptness of their replies, and at the depth of their observa-

tions. Thus God's wisdom has confounded the wisdom of the world : *Quae stulta sunt mundi elegit Deus ut confundat sapientes* (1 Cor. i, 27).

We can distinguish THREE DEGREES in this gift of knowledge. The first, necessary to salvation, gives us a deep conviction of the passing nature of every creature, and of our own selves, a consequence of our total dependence on God. The second goes further, making the soul raise itself on the wings of detachment from everything which is not God. The third, after the purification of the soul produced by a complete detachment, transfigures nature by the light of Christian symbolism : it gives us the science of the Saints.

VI. THE GIFT OF WISDOM. The wisdom of the philosopher consists in tracing effects to their highest causes—and above all to the knowledge of the First Cause, which is God —by the aid of more or less laborious reasoning. The wisdom of God does yet better ; it is not from reason, but from a certain instinct, that it draws us up to God, owing to a special and delectable *taste* which he gives to his presence and to his operations in the soul. It is this secret we must explain.

The word *wisdom* (*sapientia*) in its etymological sense, *sapere to taste,* aptly indicates the savoury fruit of the philosopher's work which rewards the steady labour of a life of study. The wise man who has ended by discovering the very highest of all truth, which is God himself, tastes the most delectable joy in his mind and heart.

But here, in the gift of divine wisdom, the order is inverted, and it is after having tasted that we recognise the truth : it is after having felt the marvellous effects of the presence and of the operation of God in our souls, that we recognise that it is indeed himself, according to the words of the Psalmist so well commented on by S Thomas : *Gustate et videte* : taste first, and you will understand afterwards. " No one can know without having tasted," teaches the holy Doctor, and that is why it is first said " *taste,* and only afterwards you will *see* " ; *Nullus cognoscit qui non gustat; et ideo dicet prius* GUSTATE, *et postea* VIDETE.[1]

But whence comes this taste for things divine in a human and earthly soul ? S Thomas has wonderfully shown it in

[1] S Thomas, in Psalm xxxiv, 9.

his beautiful theory of the "*connaturality*" of our judgements, which explained to us, long before Pascal, how the heart "has reasonings which the reason does not know." Just as, he says, a chaste man, from the very habit of the holy virtue, judges of it spontaneously, without reasoning, and in a connatural manner, so he who has divine charity which so unites him to God as to make with him "but one spirit," as S Paul says (1 Cor. vi, 17), will judge about divine things spontaneously, and this gift is that of wisdom. This divine gift puts the heart of man into unison with the heart of God, and causes him to judge spontaneously everything in the same spirit.

There we have the contrast between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God, between the spiritually minded man and the carnally minded man. The world's wisdom consists in avoiding pain and lacking nothing; the wisdom of the saints in submitting themselves in everything to Jesus Christ, according to the words of S Paul: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu* (Philip. ii, 5). Now Christ preferred poverty to riches; to the delights of the world he preferred the redeeming cross; and he has left in all these objects of his choice a celestial perfume which has drawn and enraptured all the Saints. But few souls have a sufficiently purified Christian sense to detect this intoxicating perfume, and to taste this entirely supernatural savour. They lack the wisdom of God, and yet that is the truest wisdom; the world's wisdom is but folly: *Sapientia enim hujus mundi stultitia est* (1 Cor. iii, 19).

The development of the gift of wisdom has *three* well-marked *degrees*.

The *first degree* corresponds to the precepts: it gives the soul an invincible repugnance to evil and a generous attraction to good.

The *second degree* raises it to the evangelical counsels. It draws to the cross of Jesus Christ, and causes the soul to find there those first spiritual tastes which S Teresa calls *contentments*. They have, as characteristic, that they come from the human heart, by personal effort, and then ascend and lose themselves in the heart of God; they are common to all degrees of fervent prayer, including contemplation, whether ordinary or active.

The *third degree* is distinguished by truly spiritual "tastes," very different from those already mentioned,

which, without any personal effort, seem to come from the Heart of God in order to descend and stir the heart of man, they are characteristic of passive or mystical contemplation "where it is God who, asking only our acquiescence, does all," according to the well-known words of S Teresa.

But let us allow our Saint herself to speak and explain to us this radical difference between the supernatural or mystical "tastes" and the "sensible consolations" of ascetic prayer. "We bring these sensible consolations," she tells us, "by our reflections, by considering created things, and by the wearisome work of the understanding. And as, after all, they are the fruit of our efforts, they noisily fill our soul with some spiritual profit." S Teresa has also compared this water to that which comes from afar, by force of toil or human artifice, in order to water our garden. On the contrary, the mystical water comes of itself; it is the rain from Heaven, or the spring itself. "In the other operation," she adds, "the water proceeds from the spring itself, which is God. So that when it pleases his Majesty to grant us a spiritual favour, this water flows into our innermost depths with an extreme peace, tranquillity and sweetness. But where it springs from, and in what way, that I cannot tell." (*Castle*, 4th M., ch. ii.)

Such, admirably described, are the progressive ascents of this same gift of wisdom, of these divine tastes, by which spiritual souls recognise in themselves the presence of God and the inspirations of his grace. As we see, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not reserved to the mystical state, but they have there a very different manner of working, although they conduct to the same end, union with God. As S Teresa again tells us, the ordinary ways are active, and we must co-operate at all costs; the extraordinary ways are passive, and we have, above all, to let God work in a task which is infinitely beyond us. A positive co-operation on our part is impossible; it must satisfy us to remove all that hinders the work of God in our souls.

VII. The Gift of Understanding (2a 2æ, Q. 8). Understanding or intelligence, according to the etymology of the word, *intus legere*, has the power of seeing within obscure things and penetrating them by simple intuition. Wisdom showed us the outside of things, and rather made us guess at them by the exterior effects produced in our souls, such

as the divine tastes which were delighted in while savouring them ; understanding makes us see them from within. And as here it is a question of the knowledge and contemplation of God, either active or passive, we perceive that these two gifts must occupy an exceptional rank in the interior life.

The utility and the necessity of the gift of understanding is manifest. Even with the virtue of faith, common to all the faithful, what obscurities, what misunderstandings, what errors even, at least over the details of faith! What prejudices, and even moral aberrations which may mislead the believer and make him fall, for want of a perfect light! This surprising alliance of the worst error with faith is by no means rare. Now the gift of knowledge brings to reason and faith this perfect light.

In order to understand its rôle and nature better, let us examine the THREE ascending STAGES by which this gift can increase our knowledge of God.

In the first degree, common to all the faithful—for it is necessary to salvation, like the other gifts of the Holy Spirit—this gift of intuition fills the soul with sufficient light to enable it to believe, without hesitation and unwaveringly, all revealed truths. Without doubt, one can strengthen one's faith by the deep study of the motives of credibility, or the theological harmonies of Christian dogmas ; but that is not within the reach of all minds, and therefore cannot be indispensable. The infused light of God is sufficient. One sees, in fact, ignorant and unlettered people who are very pious, whose enlightened adhesion is firmer and more invincible than the faith of learned theologians.

In the second degree, much more perfect, this same gift of understanding discloses to the mind and heart of the pious faithful the suitability, the harmonies and admirable beauties of revealed dogma. Whilst before, the existence of God, his infinite perfections, his mysteries, his Incarnation, his redemption, his Providence, meant nothing, or next to nothing, to the mind and heart, suddenly all is illuminated, and we discover truths and depths which astonish and delight us. Night or twilight has become full light of day, to the point that we cannot any longer understand how there can be men gifted with intelligence who are dazzled by so much light, or persistently refuse to believe in it. At the same time that the mind is enlightened, the divine light corrects the direction of the will, for in order to do well,

one must first see clearly. Henceforward we advance in perfection as rapidly as daylight breaks: *Justorum autem semita quasi lux splendens* (Prov. iv, 18).

In the third degree of illumination by the gift of understanding the truths of faith are uncovered, so to speak, to the soul, and faith becomes *as it were transparent*, without ceasing to be faith. For example, the presence of God and the action of his grace in us, which were invisible and unconscious in the ordinary ways of Christian life, become illuminated and conscious and easily experienced within our consciences. What else, in fact, is the mystical life but the life of grace becoming conscious and *experienced*? According to the formal teaching of S Teresa: "The supernatural" (mystic), she says, "desires that in this prayer (of quiet) the soul may see in some way with its eyes (or be conscious of) this particular help of the grace of God" (*Life*, ch. xiv). The soul is then introduced to the intimate secrets of God by a process of infused knowledge analogous to that of the angels, by a divine touch, as S John of the Cross repeatedly says.[1]

Such is the summit of the *seventh and last degree* of the golden ladder which loses itself in God. It raises our human knowledge till we are able to read a book which is infinitely more wise than all other books, and which is none other than God himself.

Doubtless we shall only be able to read it perfectly in the beatitude of Heaven; however, here below it is given to certain privileged souls, to the mystical Saints, to anticipate this blessed vision, at least in a certain way and to a certain degree. And this divine gift S Thomas calls not so much the gift of Wisdom but of Understanding. "*In hac etiam vita, purgato oculo, per donum intellectus, Deus quodammodo videri potest*" (1a 2æ, Q. 69, a. 2, ad. 3).

It is this gift which allows us to contemplate the presence of God himself in our souls, in its immediate action (*experimental contact with the Divine*), nevertheless without seeing his essence. The positive aspect of this essence, *quid est*, remains hidden from us; he shows us only its negative aspect, *quid non est*. This latter favour, adds S Thomas,

[1] "Contemplation is not to *act* but to *suffer* or *receive*: *la contemplacion pura consiste en recibir*."—Receiving what? "In the *apex* of the mind (without sensible images) . . . the touch of the understanding . . . and in the heart the touch of pure love." (*Living Flame*, III, iii, 57.)

belongs to the initial gift of understanding ; the former to the gift of understanding fully *developed* in glory. But it is the same gift, adapting itself to two different mediums, earth and Heaven, and elevating itself by degrees to perfect intuition.[1]

This is why, from this point of view, S Thomas has more than once given the gift of understanding precedence over that of wisdom, as in his psychology he has always given intuition precedence over judgement and reason. It is in fact by intellectual intuition, however limited it may be here below, that man is like the angels, and is capable of seeing God, *capax Dei*.[2]

Such is at least the hierarchical order of logic and psychology ; but from the point of view of divine charity and holiness, it is the gift of wisdom which is justly regarded as the most sanctifying and the most excellent. It is wisdom with its divine tastes which is directly produced by the love of God, and which in its turn, by a wonderful reciprocity, amplifies and exalts this divine love. And although it may be posterior to intuition and dependent on it, wisdom, when it is raised to the Supreme Cause, which is God, judges everything by the divine light, and dominates all the intellectual virtues.[3]

In the spiritual life and in contemplation, the parts are thus very well divided : Understanding sees and penetrates within ; wisdom tastes and judges all : *Intellectus est omnium penetrativum; sapientia omnium judex per causas altissimas* (1a 2æ, Q. 68, a. 4).

If such—too briefly summed up, without doubt—are the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which complete the seven infused virtues (theological and moral), we can

[1] Duplex est visio Dei : una quidem *perfecta* per quam videtur Dei essentia ; alia vero *imperfecta*, per quam, etsi non videamus de Deo *quid est*, videmus tamen *quid non est* . . . secunda pertinet ad donum intellectus inchoatum, secundum quod habetur in patria (2a 2æ, Q. 8, a. 7). (Cf. 2a 2æ, Q. 3, a. 7 ; 1a 2æ, Q. 69, a. 2, ad 3).

[2] In intellectus simplici visione continuatur homo superioribus substantiis quæ Angeli dicuntur (III Dist. 35, Q. 1, a. 2, sol. 3 ; 2a 2æ, Q. 180, a. 6, ad 2, etc.) ; Capax Dei (3a, Q. 6, a. 2 ; Q. 9, a. 3, ad 2 ; *C. Gent.*, c. 57), etc.

[3] Sapientia habet judicium de omnibus aliis virtutibus intellectualibus et ejus est ordinare omnes, et ipsa est quasi architectonia respectu omnium (1a 2æ, Q. 66, a. 5).

already embrace AT ONE GLANCE the wonderful psychological organism of the supernatural life—before even having spoken of the seven *beatitudes* and the *fruits* of the Holy Ghost, which are the issue and corollary of it.

Let us note first that this number "seven," so often repeated in our holy Books, expresses much less a mathematical and rigorous computation than a plenitude and superabundance impossible to describe, according to the words of S Augustine, *Pro cujusque rei universitate poni solet.*[1]

This being understood, we have seen that after having deified the very substance of our souls, by an analogous participation of resemblance with God, who allows us to call him "our Father", the Holy Spirit has endowed the powers of these souls with a double instrument. Firstly, the infused virtues, permanent principles of activity under the direction of reason enlightened by Faith. Then the infused gifts or supernatural instincts, which have no need of reason, and by which the Holy Spirit himself takes the direction of our supernatural life, coming thus to the help of the weakness or lack of the virtues, *in adjutorium virtutum.* And, indeed, this continual weakness demands the continual intervention of the gifts.

The supernatural organism then is inferior in nothing, structurally, to the natural organism, since it also has instincts innate or infused with the supernatural life, in order to supplement the failings of reason.

The *chief force,* which is going to set in motion this organism, we have already indicated: on God's side it is *actual grace,* which at every moment intervenes in order to provoke us to supernatural activity. On man's side corresponds an *inborn desire* in the innermost depths of our being or of our will, the desire to unite ourselves intellectually and affectively, not only to the true, the beautiful and the good in general, but to God himself, who is the True, the Beautiful and the Good, the source of all truth, beauty and goodness.

In a word *the mainspring* of all spiritual force is our natural desire for happiness, enlightened by faith. It is this desire to see God, and to possess him in eternal beatitude, that S Thomas has declared naturally inborn, at least radically. Our deification by grace has realised this desire, lessening the infinite disproportion between two

[1] S Aug., *De Civitate Dei,* Bk. XI, c. xxxi.

opposed terms: God and the soul, intimately present one to the other, and one in the other, since the creation, and, above all, since baptismal regeneration, which has made the soul the temple of God. Henceforward, according to the sublime words of S Augustine, repeated by S Thomas, the human soul is capable of seeing God, and of possessing him: *capax Dei;* and it is this divine instinct which urges us towards him without rest or repose: *Fecisti nos ad te, Deus, et irrequietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te. . . .*[1]

ARTICLE V

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit and the Beatitudes[2]

When a human soul has all its powers lifted up and perfected by the infused virtues and gifts, it has all that is necessary in order to follow the movements of actual grace, and live a perfect Christian life leading to eternal beatitude. Like a great tree, fully developed, and within which a generous sap circulates, it should bear flowers and delicious fruits.

These fruits are enumerated by S Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians (ch. v, 22, 23). He counts twelve of them: Charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, kindness, long-animity, mildness, faith, modesty, continence and chastity: *Charitas, gaudium, pax, patientia, benignitas, bonitas, longanimitas, mansuetudo, fides, modestia, continentia, castitas.*

So much data excited, throughout the centuries, the sagacity of commentators and the subtlety of theologians. Without entering here into all the subtle discussions raised about them, notably upon the manner of attaching these fruits to the infused virtues and gifts which correspond to them[3], let us content ourselves with the following conclusions, which appear to us the most plausible.

The word *fruit* comes from *fructus*, which designates the products of all life, vegetable or animal, and also

[1] S Augustine, *De Trinitate*, xvi, 11; S Thomas, 3a, Q. 6, a. 2; Q. 9, a. 3, ad 2um, etc.; *C. Gent.*, c. 57.

[2] Gardeil, *Les dons du Saint-Esprit dans les saints Dominicains* (Paris, 1903); Froget, *De l'habitation du Saint-Esprit dans les âmes des justes* (Paris, 1900). See also the curious *Arbor prædicamentalis* of the *Salmanticenses* and the picturesque diagram which illustrates the relations between the virtues, the gifts, the fruits, and the Beatitudes.

[3] S Thomas, 1a, 2æ, Q. 68 and 69, a. 1, 2 and 3.

from *frui*, to enjoy, because every normal act accomplished according to nature's laws, if it is a conscious one, produces enjoyment.

According to the great and enlightened theory of Aristotle, repeated by S Thomas and the schoolmen, pleasure is not the act of one special faculty, but the fruit of every conscious vital act, if it is conformed to the inclination of nature.

So also with the supernatural life. Every act of virtue is both a normal product with the virtuous man, and a normal enjoyment, which is an anticipated reward, as well as an encouragement to produce fresh ones.

However, there are fruits so delicious and rare, that they have been called BEATITUDES, because they appear to us rather like an anticipation of the beatitude of heaven, so incomparably superior are they to all earthly happiness. They all relate to the most heroic acts of the Christian life, or of the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord himself has preached them in his Sermon on the Mount, addressing not only his apostles, but the whole multitude, for he has placed them within the reach of all.

Although they may be rather exceptional, everyone may sometimes need this sublime ideal, not only to console us here below, but to raise and strengthen us, and, above all, to direct our entire lives beyond earthly treasures which pass away, towards the eternal treasures which cannot pass away.

Here are the beatitudes as we find them enumerated in S Luke vi, 20-26, and still more completely in S Matt. v, 3-10.

" Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

S Luke and also S Matthew add an eighth beatitude, " Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice sake," but that is included easily in the seven others, and is the consequence of them.

It is useless to show here how opposed these heavenly beatitudes are to those of the earth ; and what astonishment, mingled with admiration and enthusiasm, this language

and this spirit freshly brought from heaven to earth, must have produced upon the multitude of unaccustomed listeners.

All these beatitudes, observes S Thomas, are assuredly rewards promised in the other life ; but even here below—and it is this fact which is new—we see all the saints participating in them beforehand : *Omnia quæ in beatitudinibus ponuntur tanquam præmia . . . ad futuram vitam pertinent, vel aliqua beatitudinis inchoatio, et sic ad præsentem vitam spectant . . . sicut patet in viris sanctis* (2a 2æ, Q. 69, a. 2).

Thus appears to the eyes of all, the beauty, the superlative grandeur, and the utility, of the Christian life, since it is already on this earth, in varying degrees, a living participation in the Truth, Goodness, and Beauty of God, and, therefore, in his eternal beatitude. The more fully a soul is possessed by the Holy Spirit, the more holy it is, and the nearer it approaches a blessed felicity. No, there can be nothing better or more delectable here below : it is by anticipation the dawn of heaven.

ARTICLE VI

The Distribution of the Gifts : Active and Contemplative Life.

The variety and marvellous richness of the virtues and gifts which we have just studied permits divine Providence to group them all, like musical instruments, into a number of different orchestras in the spiritual concert of the life of the Church, the two general types of which correspond to the ACTIVE LIFE and the CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.

These two are themselves subdivided into a multitude of particular types, as is shown by the surprising diversity of religious families of men, and especially of women. S Paul stated it admirably even in his time, " Every one," he said, " hath his proper gift from God—one after this manner, and another after that."[1]

The Holy Spirit, in fact, distributes among souls inborn aptitudes and graces of vocation, as it pleases him. Not that any soul could, after baptism, lack the essential gifts which necessarily accompany sanctifying grace, but their

[1] Unusquisque proprium donum habet ex Deo : alius quidem sic, alius vero sic (1 Cor. vii, 7). At this period they did not speak of the infused gift of contemplation given impartially to all, which our infidelity alone (or that of our directors) hinders!

degrees of development are far from being the same with all. In some, the gifts of the active life predominate (fear, fortitude, piety, counsel); in others, in less numbers, the gifts of the contemplative life (knowledge, wisdom and understanding). This is an indisputable fact, so universally is it observed.

THE REASON OF THIS is in the eternal secrets of the predestination of man, for vocation follows predestination, according to the words of S Paul: *Quos prædestinavit, hos et vocavit* (Rom. viii, 30). Now the call of God is interior and exterior. The first is an interior instinct, the heart being touched by a special grace of God. *Vocare interius*, says Vallgornera, interpreting S Thomas, *est vocare per quendam instinctum interiorem, quo Deus per gratiam tangit cor.*[1] The second makes itself heard through the voice of authority: *Veni, sequere me* (Matt. xix, 21). The two equally indicate the direction of a soul, whether towards the active life, or the contemplative life, and a wise director must always respect and never thwart it.[2]

Let us limit ourselves to a few words concerning these two kinds of vocation.

I. THE ACTIVE LIFE, which is by far the more common, is a consecration of oneself to exterior works of charity and apostleship—always after having laboured at one's own sanctification, for, according to the words of our Lord, an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit (Matt. vii, 18). Thus the first stage of the active life is the exercise of all the precepts and all the virtues. As S Thomas has taken care to remark, to do good to one's neighbour one must begin by setting him an example: *Proximos, suo exemplo, dirigere ad bonum* (2a 2æ, Q. 181, a. 1).[3]

These exterior works of beneficence are of two sorts: temporal and spiritual, giving bread to the body or the soul, according to the words of S Gregory: *Vita activa est panem esurienti tribuere, aut verbo sapientiæ nescientem docere* (*Super Ezech.*, hom. ii, l. II; § 8, col. 953, t. 2).

[1] Vallgornera, *Theologia mystica*, vol. I, n. 610, p. 434.

[2] "It is a very dangerous thing," writes S Ignatius, "to endeavour to urge all men to advance towards perfection by the same road; a director who behaves in this way understands nothing of the varied diversity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit." (*Selectæ S Ignatii sententiæ*).

[3] Cf. Vallgornera, *ibid.*, vol. II, n. 1149, 1152, 1154; App., n. 481.

The distribution of material help, such as the giving of alms, caring for the sick, and the like, is a less exalted task which only demands the exercise of the moral virtues, notably prudence, which governs them all, and the assistance of the corresponding gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as fortitude and piety.

The distribution of spiritual help by word and instruction, which is infinitely more noble, exacts moreover the most elevated gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as the gifts of knowledge, wisdom and understanding, at least in their earlier degrees. And so the religious families vowed to this apostleship hold the first rank.[1]

It is needless to prove the merits and benefits of such active lives. Our Lord himself has given praise to those who follow them and promised them reward, since on the day of the Last Judgement he will solemnly say to them: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me. . . As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." (Matt. xxv, 34-40.)

II. The Contemplative Life, in the widest sense of the word, is that wherein man—after having quelled his passions and separated himself from the cares and turmoils of exterior affairs—passes his time, inspired by the love of God, in devoting himself to works of religion and piety: pious studies, meditation, petition, and prayer.[2] In the varied degrees of prayer, he raises himself step by step from the contemplation of God's works to the contemplation of

[1] Summum gradum in religionibus tenent quæ ordinantur ad docendum et prædicandum. Opus vitæ activæ duplex: *unum* quod ex plenitudine contemplationis derivatur sicut doctrina et prædicatio . . . Et hoc præfertur simplici contemplationi. Sicut enim majus est illuminare quam lucere solum, ita majus est contemplata aliis tradere quam solum contemplari. *Aliud* autem opus est vitæ activæ quod totaliter consistit in occupatione exteriori, sicut eleemosynas dare, hospites recipere, et alia hujusmodi quæ sunt minora operibus contemplationis, nisi forte in casu necessitatis, ut supra patet (2a 2æ, Q. 188, a. 6).

[2] Partes contemplationis tres sunt, sc.: lectio, meditatio et oratio (cf. 2a 2æ, Q. 180, a. 3, ad 4). It is in this very wide sense that S Thomas frequently uses the word "contemplation." This must be borne in mind to guard against the worst errors.

God himself, and it is through the more and more perfect knowledge of God, whom he loves and who loves him, it is through the possession and fruition of this sovereign Good—as far as is possible here on earth—that he finds, in the loftiness and perfection of his life, a foretaste of eternal beatitude. The contemplative life is practised more easily in the cloisters of certain religious orders, or in the solitude of the hermit's cell; however, it has been found by exception in the midst of the world and the cares of ordinary life, where certain privileged souls have found the means of retiring within themselves and uniting themselves with God.

Such a life implies all the virtues, and helps to perfect them, especially the theological virtues, and the corresponding gifts, notably the gifts of knowledge, wisdom and understanding, in their highest degrees. Our Lord himself praised this contemplative life, when he told Martha that her sister Mary had chosen the better part: *Maria optimam partem elegit quæ non auferetur ab ea* (Luke x, 42). And the chief reason of this incomparable superiority is that it is a beginning of the beatitude of Heaven, of which it gives us a foretaste, as we have just said. S Thomas adds many other reasons (to the number of eight), the second of which is that the contemplative life can be more continuous, and last longer than the active life, which shows plainly that he is not here concerned with passive or mystical contemplation in a strict sense—that of the four last "Mansions" of S Teresa, who affirms it to be of very short duration.

Yet if the contemplative life is superior in itself and by its nature to the active life, yet, as S Thomas again observes, many reasons, such as necessity or obedience, may impose on us the choice of the latter (2a 2æ, Q., 181. a. 1). And S Teresa adds with her great good sense: "If Martha had been a contemplative, like Mary, who then would have prepared the meals for the divine Saviour?"[1]

Let us then admire the variety no less indispensable than the unity[2] of the vocations, and let us leave the secret of the choice of them to the sovereign liberty of the Holy Spirit, always wise and merciful: *Spiritus ubi vult spirat* (Jo. iii, 8).

Moreover, the contemplative life is not always the one in which man gains most merit. Though it be *per se* the

[1] *Way*, ch. xviii.

[2] Idem Spiritus (1 Cor. xii, 11). Multi unum corpus in Christo (Rom. xii, 5).

more meritorious, since it is better to love God than one's neighbour,[1] yet it may so happen that the merit is greater in the active life, either because of the more painful work[2] or because we may bring to it a greater love of God or, finally, if from love of God that we deprive ourselves of the sweetness of contemplation in order to devote ourselves to the active life.[3]

The highest ideal, always following S Thomas, would be to imitate the holy Angels, who, in their ministry to mankind, never lose sight of God, thus uniting the active and contemplative life, without ever separating them. According to the enlightened words of the Angelic Doctor: "It is not with *loss* of the beatific vision, but in *addition* to it, that these pure spirits receive exterior missions": *non per modum subtractionis, sed per modum additionis* (2a 2æ, Q. 181, a. 4. ad 2; Q. 182, a. 1, ad 3).

III. The Gratuitous Graces of the Active Life.—All the graces we have spoken of up to now, including the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, are of themselves graces of personal sanctification which render us pleasing to God, *gratum Deo facientes*, and concern but indirectly the good of our neighbour by expanding into the good works of the active life. In order to secure more directly the edification of the faithful, God, in his inexhaustible goodness, adds at times extraordinary graces, called *gratis datæ*, because they are entirely gratuitous and cannot be merited in any way, either *de condigno* or *de congruo*, whether God gives them to us, or augments them, or maintains them. Thus they differ from the graces of personal sanctification, which can be merited *de congruo*, and even *de condigno* in their increase. The sinner by his prayers and contrition can gain pardon through God's mercy; and sanctifying grace once recovered, since it is the principle of all merit, he can obtain its increase, and by his good works merit eternal reward, by virtue of the promises of our Lord.

[1] Deum diligere secundum se, est magis meritorium quam diligere proximum (2a, 2æ, Q. 182, a. 2).

[2] Labor exterior operatur ad augmentum præmii accidentalis (2a 2æ, Q. 182, a. 2, ad 1).

[3] Potest tamen contingere quod aliquis in operibus vitæ activæ plus mereatur quam alius in operibus vitæ contemplativæ, puta si propter abundantiam divini amoris, ut ejus voluntas impleatur, propter ipsius gloriam, interdum sustinet a dulcedine divinæ contemplationis ad tempus separari (*ibid.*, a. 2).

But these new gifts are entirely gratuitous. Here is the enumeration according to the Apostle S Paul (1 Cor. xii, 2) of these extraordinary graces intended for the edification of the faithful. The first three are gifts of utterance in order to communicate *wisdom, knowledge* and *faith.* The others are the gifts of *healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues,* and the *interpretation of discourses.* The last four were more frequent amongst early Christians, but they have never been entirely lacking in the Church. As to the first three, they are found in every Christian age, and even to our own days the gifts of speech continue to be exercised.

All these gifts may be called miraculous in this sense, that none of them is a regular and constant power, but incidental and fleeting. They are, therefore, outside the ordinary and normal order of the supernatural ways of the grace of God. They could even be given, strictly speaking, to sinners deprived of sanctifying grace, although God holds it for his honour to choose better ministers of his graces.

IV. The Gratuitous Graces of the Contemplative Life.—Are there, also, in the contemplative life, entirely gratuitous graces? In other words, are there graces which are only useful, without being in any way necessary, to our personal sanctification? If they were necessary, they would no longer be absolutely gratuitous, since they would be due to our prayers or our merits in virtue of our Lord's promises. It is a question, then, only of those graces useful to our sanctification, whose aim is to procure it in a more rapid or less painful way. They are, as can be said following S Teresa, "short cuts" to sanctification.

To this question S Thomas, according to Vallgornera, has replied with a decided affirmative.[1] And the experience of mystical contemplatives shows plainly that it is so. As incontestable examples, it is sufficient to quote the interior words which contemplatives hear at times, the ecstasies, visions, prophecies, stigmata and all the incidental and marvellous phenomena which we have studied in the second part of our treatise on mysticism.

The whole difficulty—the object of contemporary controversy—is to know if certain entirely gratuitous and relatively extraordinary graces of the common contempla-

[1] *Theologia mystica,* vol. I, n. 665 *et seq.,* p. 480. *Principium . . . contemplationis . . . altius donis Spiritus sancti.*

tive life, cannot become habitual or normal in a superior order of contemplation ; in a word, if there are not two very different sorts of contemplation, the one ordinary and active under the action of the Holy Spirit, which is but the regular expansion of his gifts, and the normal achievement of the Christian life received in germ at baptism ; the other truly extraordinary relatively to the first, because it is marked by graces absolutely gratuitous, and in no way necessary to perfection or sanctity. Thus, for example, it produces *passive states* in us, " where it is God who does all," asking only our consent, and by this conscious passivity makes us consciously experience either the presence or the operations of God in our souls—in a manner contrary to the ordinary ways of grace where this consciousness is always refused us. Is not that, then, an entirely gratuitous grace, and one in no way necessary to our spiritual life ? We could quote other examples, such as the entirely passive and involuntary meditation, which is, says S Teresa, the ante-chamber of quietude, the first degree of the mystic life ; or that more or less complete suspension of the powers, raised to an entirely new way of knowing and acting, which is the basis of all the mystic degrees described by our mystical saints. But let us not anticipate. Let us only take a glimpse at the problem, which will be studied and discussed at length in the course of our mystical theology. It is sufficient that we should now show its great interest, and its connection with ascetical questions, or the ordinary ways, which we treat of here.

ARTICLE VII

Of the Guidance of the Holy Spirit

From this fundamental doctrine upon the nature of the psychological organism with which grace has endowed our supernatural life, spring the GRAVEST PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES. Therefore this article is rather a simple corollary or application of the preceding ones.

The Holy Spirit lives in our souls and works there by the ordinary intermediary of those supernatural powers which he has constructed there, that is to say, by the infused virtues and gifts, which render our faculties pliable and docile under his action. We must necessarily conclude that it is for the utility of our souls, and even an imperative duty

incumbent on us, to hold ourselves attentive to his interior workings, and to his intimate inspirations, in order to follow his guidance faithfully. This is what has been called the PRACTICE OF THE INTERIOR LIFE, so highly recommended by all the saints and all the masters of the spiritual life, notably by the school of Fr. Lallemant, S.J., who has devoted more than a hundred pages to it in his *Spiritual Doctrine*, which we shall use here, while making our own additions.

Firstly, FIVE general OBJECTIONS have been made to this doctrine or practice of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, chiefly because it has been misunderstood.

I. IN THE FIRST PLACE, there are those who have dared to say that it ran the risk of renewing the error of the numerous *Illuminati* who have appeared at all times and places, notably Spain in the sixteenth century, where it was mercilessly suppressed by the Spanish Inquisition. But who at the first glance does not see the radical difference? These heretics pretended to be in habitual communication, direct or immediate, with the Holy Spirit, without any intermediary, either of grace and the sacraments which produced it, or of those habits created in our souls, the infused virtues and gifts, which we have compared to the vital organs or instruments of sanctifying grace. Several of these heretics—wrongly interpreting certain texts of S Bonaventure or of Peter Lombard—even went so far as to pretend that our virtue of charity, for example, was the Holy Ghost himself in person, hypostatically united to our intelligence and our heart by a union analogous to that of the Incarnation. On the contrary, as we have taught, it is a created perfection, a quality of our soul; and our act of charity is not immediately and uniquely an act of the Holy Spirit, but a vital act elicited by the virtue of charity. This virtue has intervened in the act, either as *formal* cause in order to supernaturalise internally our loving will, or as *efficient* cause, producing with the will the vital act of charity. Therefore, it is indeed our own act, and not uniquely that of the Holy Spirit. Also, it is not infallible, nor perfect, but subject to the control of our reason, of our faith, and of the rulings of the Church. The "Illuminati," pretending to be living incarnations of the Holy Spirit, raised themselves, quite logically, above the triple control of common sense, faith, and the Church. On their part it

was but a mad error, which by deifying each individual ended in revolt against all law, and the worst disasters.

Certain contemporary mystics are not sufficiently on their guard, to our mind, against like illusions. They object, in fact, "Then you do not believe in the Holy Spirit and his interior inspiration?" Certainly we believe in it, we will reply, but we also believe in the necessity of a guide for the discernment of spirits, according to the wise advice of the apostle: *Omnia probate; quod bonum est tenete* (1 Thes. v, 21).

We have already given authorised rules for the discernment of spirits, in the ordinary ways,[1] just as we have done in mysticism, for distinguishing miraculous visions from natural hallucinations.[2]

II. Second Objection.—Does not our doctrine renew at least the *Protestant error* on private judgement and private interpretation of Holy Scripture? A little reflection will prove the contrary.

Heretics only invented this private interpretation to overthrow the superior principle of the teaching authority of the Church, to elude the definitions of Councils, the teaching of the Fathers and tradition, and to rule all by the caprice of their individual reason, thus deified.

We, on the contrary, fully submitting to the authority of the Church and her legitimate representatives, only recognise as divine the interior inspirations which conform to the directions of the Church, for the God of Truth cannot contradict himself.

III. Third Objection.—Does not our doctrine relax, at least, the *bonds of obedience* which religious subjects have vowed to their superiors? These superiors, in fact, not being infallible, cannot always enforce their orders with the authority of the Church, and their personal authority would then be held in check by the opposite inspirations of the Holy Spirit. In no way, we reply, for we assert that obedience is always a duty, even when superiors are deceived in good faith. In any doubt, the presumption is always in their favour, unless their error is evident; they must, then, be obeyed.

Moreover, the superiors are themselves apt to receive inspirations from the Holy Spirit, and sooner or later they

[1] Part II, ch. viii. Cf. *Imitation*, Bk. III, ch. liv.

[2] *Mystical Phenomena*, pp. 348 *et seq.*

will become docile and attentive to him, so that any error will be repaired. Meanwhile, the religious will have had all the merit of obedience, to which the Spirit of God will always incline him, far from ever turning him away from it. Holy souls in religion have always thought and acted thus, and the Church has always approved and blessed them; an inspiration of the Holy Spirit contrary to obedience is delusive and false.

IV. The fourth objection against this doctrine of the guidance of the Holy Spirit pretends that it favours spiritual idleness. Why, in fact, reflect, deliberate, consult wise or learned men, when one is directed by the Holy Spirit? Of what good are all the lights of earth, when one has those of God himself?

We reply by the very theory of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which we have just explained. Very far from suppressing human reason enlightened by Faith, or the other faculties of the soul, they merely complete them when necessary, in more obscure or difficult circumstances. If we possess all our natural and supernatural faculties, then we must use them first before expecting the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, to which we have no claim. According to the wise maxim, *Help yourself, and heaven will help you*, let us begin by faithfully using all the resources which our psychological supernatural organism puts at our disposal, as well as all the exterior help within our reach, above all, the Sacraments, and the advice of a wise director. Then only can we hope that in addition, the providential directions of the Holy Spirit will not fail us.

To act otherwise, from spiritual laziness, or by a mad presumption, would be on the contrary to tempt God in spite of his formal prohibition[1] and to place an obstacle to heavenly favours, whose inspirations are usually given only to those who by their fidelity to common graces are worthy of them. Once again: *Help yourself, and heaven will help you.*

Such is the providential rule of the Spirit of God in the guidance of souls. A thousand characteristic examples could be quoted. Thus, when S Paul was struck down on the road to Damascus, far from being immediately enlightened

[1] Noli esse quasi homo qui tentat Deum (Eccli. xviii, 23). Non tentabis Dominum Deum tuum (Deut. vi, 16; Matt. iv, 7; Luke iv, 12).

upon what he had to do, the Holy Spirit sent him to Ananias to be instructed and directed, showing us thus that the ordinary means instituted by God must be first employed, the others only coming as an addition, when he judges fit.

V. Finally, a FIFTH AND LAST OBJECTION, the most frequent, is the following: Many souls complain that they have never felt this direction by the Spirit of God. It is then, for them at least, quite useless to hope for it, and pretend to it; they may, therefore, do without it.

We would first beg leave to doubt the alleged fact that certain truly Christian and fundamentally good souls have never felt this voice of God in their conscience, showing them clearly what they should do, especially in certain hours of grave temptation or poignant anguish when, for example, the future setting of their whole life appears cruelly undecided and doubtful. No, never have the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, when necessary for doing good and avoiding evil, failed men, above all when they were in a state of grace, and in the most solemn hours of their lives.

If these inspirations have become rare, so rare that we could believe them non-existent, we must ask whose fault it is. For in other souls, by the universal witness of all directors, they become more and more frequent, so as to seem almost habitual.

The fault assuredly is with man, not with God. It is the sinner who must strike his breast and own humbly that it is his fault, his great fault. The soul being entirely *taken up exteriorly* by the affairs and amusements of this world, hardly ever retiring within itself to see what is happening there, it is not to be wondered at that sinful men no longer feel the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is entirely internal, and whose touches are so delicate.

After dissipation comes a second obstacle, namely *sensuality* and an unmortified life. God will not open the interior senses which grasp the divine, until these exterior senses have been well closed to the sensual contaminations of this world—so many clouds which hide and conceal this guidance of God from the soul.

Interior meditation and purity of heart are the two great spiritual remedies to heal our blindness, and to make the scales fall from our eyes which hinder us from seeing and distinguishing the guidance of the Spirit of God.

To these two essential remedies *perseverance* must be added, for one does not become a man of "interior life" in a single day. In the spiritual life, as in nature, the night follows the day, and day the night. The alternatives thrust themselves on one. But as the day is more or less long according as the Pole is more or less distant, so we must aspire to enjoy perpetual day shining in our soul, when having well purified it from all earthly affection, and having set the compass and fixed the needle towards the pole of eternity, we shall enjoy always the breeze of the Spirit of God. Then in everything we shall no longer be guided by human sense, but by a divine sense, seeking always and everywhere the glory of God and the good of souls. Reason and good sense enlightened by faith are excellent guides, but they are not sufficient for Christian perfection ; for perfection looks still higher, to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, frequently found in generous souls, and habitual in the Saints.

Our doctrine upon fidelity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit is not affected then by any of the five objections, or the misunderstandings which are so frequently brought against it, for it is not understood by those who distort it.

But there are particular forms of this intervention of God, frequent enough in fervent souls, which need other explanations. We mean COLLOQUIES OF THE SOUL WITH GOD. All books of affective meditations are filled with them, including the *Imitation of Christ*, and they might give rise to erroneous interpretations, confusing the active and passive ways, and the ascetic and mystical, if we do not take care.

Even in the natural order our conscience often makes us hear as it were two voices, good and evil, of the flesh and the spirit, answering each other.

This apparent duality is the well-known phenomenon, which Buffon called the *duplex homo*, the double man, and whose internal struggles S Paul has described in such poignant terms in his Epistle to the Romans: "I see another law in my members," he cries, "fighting against the law of my mind. . . . Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"[1]

The reason for this duality in the same *ego*, is none other than the opposition and struggle of contrary habits and

[1] Video autem aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legi mentis meæ . . . Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus? (Rom. vii, 23, 24).

tendencies, or sometimes only different tendencies completing and helping each other.

The *voice of conscience* is really a metaphorical and poetic expression for a living reality. Poets and orators, like moralists, have been careful not to neglect such a precious mine of lofty sentiment, and have exploited it with the greatest success. In the supernatural order even more so, since—as we have seen—sanctifying grace has enriched our souls with the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that is to say, the inborn supernatural habits or instincts, more powerful than the natural instincts, especially when they are put in motion by actual special graces. Hence those inspirations from on high which sometimes invade us and suddenly surprise us, without our having in any way provoked them, and also those emotional responses in our souls, which establish an exchange of thoughts and pious sentiments between them and their God, imitate human colloquies of friend to friend, of a father to his child, of a judge to the accused, of a master to his disciple. . . .

"Blessed the soul," cries the author of the *Imitation*, "who thus hears the Lord speak to him inwardly, and who receives from his mouth the words of consolation!"—*Beata anima quæ Dominum in se loquentem audit, et de ore ejus verbum consolationis accipit.* . . . (Book III, ch. i).

The real duality of the related persons is here only apparent, and we are never deceived about it, if we are in a normal state. We are then clearly conscious of having experienced neither vision, nor apparition, nor revelation, nor any direct touch from God, but simply the feelings of devotion which are provoked by his grace. This phenomenon is not then false, and God can allow it, and even bring it into play, for the spiritual advantage of souls. He thus indirectly speaks to us by the voice of our conscience, such as the voice of remorse or love, more intimately and surely than by the eloquent voice of his preachers, or the silent voice of his inspired books: it is a great grace! Quite different are truly mystical colloquies—in the fuller sense of the word—where God himself directly intervenes by his visions, revelations, inward words sensibly felt or purely spiritual, or by his divine touch. God is sufficiently powerful, in fact, to speak to souls in other ways than by sensible images and the voice of conscience. At a later stage we will study the perfectly sure criteria by which the voice of God can be

recognised and distinguished from morbid hallucinations or diabolic delusions.[1]

The spiritual and wordless language of God, says S Teresa, is absolutely inimitable : neither the imagination nor the devil can counterfeit it ; and it also carries with it an absolute certitude, without the shadow of doubt, into the souls which are favoured by it. Besides, the spiritual consolations which it produces are of such a different order that our saint has to coin two words in order to distinguish them—that of *divine tastes* for the passive or mystical ways, and that of *contentments* for the active or ordinary ways of Christian piety, as we explain in mystical theology.

But we must not anticipate and leave the ordinary ways of the spiritual life which is our present subject, in order to enter these superior regions, which are not at present our concern.

Let us pass to the SALUTARY EFFECTS which the practice of the interior life, and fidelity to the inspirations of grace, usually produce in all fervent souls. They will complete the justification of a devotion very dear to all who love the spiritual life.

We content ourselves with noticing here two characteristic benefits, namely, a *strength of soul* which can rapidly rise even to the heroism of virtue, and a *celestial peace* near to the beatitude of Heaven.

1. HEROIC FORTITUDE. The souls of the elect, who allow themselves to be habitually guided by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, are well compared to those ships which are borne along on the ocean, all sails set, and having a fair wind ; whilst ordinary Christians are likened to a boat which only progresses by the power of its oars, and very much more slowly against wind and tide, in spite of much more work and effort expended. The Saints arrive at this point of perfection—as history abundantly proves—of doing without trouble the things which appear to us most difficult, and of undertaking works humanly impossible, about which we would not even dare to think. It is the strength of Almighty God which smoothes away all their difficulties and providentially removes all obstacles.[2]

[1] See the author's *Mystical Phenomena*, pp. 348 ff.

[2] Virtue is called "*heroic*" when it exceeds the ordinary degree of simply perfect souls in accomplishing acts of extraordinary difficulty ; it is termed simply "perfect" when it performs promptly, easily, with pleasure and steadfastness, the ordinary acts of Christian virtue.

2. Now when the soul feels itself thus lifted on the wings of grace, and animated by divine strength, it is entirely filled with PEACE AND CONSOLATION, and this is the second effect of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Hence the name of Paraclete, or Comforter, which our Lord used when announcing his approaching descent on the apostles.

We greatly need this peace and consolation in view of the uncertainty of our salvation and final perseverance. That is a truth of faith which would cause inconceivable torment to the holiest of souls, if the divine Spirit did not reassure them in their innermost depths, by the inward conviction that they love God and that God loves them, that they are God's and that God belongs to them. This testimony banishes all fear and renews a filial confidence in God's goodness, which is, as S Paul says, the pledge and assurance of our celestial heritage : *si filii et heredes* (Rom. viii, 17).

We need peace and consolation also in the crosses and varied misfortunes of this earthly life, which is full of physical and moral ills, and beset with ambushes by man and devil.

Now this is the consolation which the divine Spirit pours into the souls which he has tried. It fortifies them, revives them, heals their pains and sufferings, and helps them to find joy and delight in the heaviest cross, even to the point of exclaiming with S Paul : " I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation " : *superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra* (2 Cor. vii, 4).

When one has experienced the heavenly sweetness of these divine consolations, their earthly counterpart seems bitter and empty, and while incapable of giving us interior consolation, rather increases the burden of our wretchedness. " I dare proclaim," a great mystic has truly written, " that one single taste of divine consolation can do what all the pleasures of the world cannot accomplish. These worldly pleasures cannot satisfy the heart, and one moment of that interior calm which the Holy Spirit pours into the soul takes it out of itself and floods it with intoxicating joy."[1]

Such are the precious results which the fidelity of a Christian soul to the guidance of the Holy Spirit obtains. They fully justify our desire for a more and more constant and fervent inner life.

[1] Richard of S. Victor, quoted by P. Lallemant, *ibid.*, p. 205.

CHAPTER II

The Channels of Divine Grace

WE have just treated of the supernatural help of the grace of God, both actual and habitual, which is accompanied by the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, constituting the living organism of the Christian life. We must now speak of the channels by which this grace or divine life is brought to our souls.

Now these channels are *prayer* and the *sacraments* which derive their efficacy from our *incorporation in Christ*, our divine Mediator. Let us glance briefly at these points.

One could sum up the whole of the Christian religion and spiritual life in the example of the great apostle who only knew and preached one doctrine, that of Jesus and Jesus crucified: *Non judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum et hunc crucifixum* (1 Cor. ii, 2). We must then clearly explain this FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH.

ARTICLE I

Our Incorporation with Christ

The life of God in us or *the life of Jesus in us* are synonymous expressions in Christian language, because in Jesus, the God-Man, dwells the fulness of the divine life, as S Paul points out to us: *In quo inhabitat omnis plenitudo Divinitatis corporaliter* (Col. ii, 9) and it is from this plenitude and by this channel, adds S John, that we have received all grace: *De plenitudine ejus nos omnes accepimus* (Jo. ii, 16).

This teaching the apostles had received from the lips of their divine Master himself at the most solemn hour of his life on earth. In the intimate discourse which followed the Last Supper, he taught his apostles in the striking form of a parable: "I am the vine and you are the branches," thus showing that we receive divine grace from him as the branches of the vine receive their life from the stem to which they are attached. And just as the stem and its

branches form one living plant, so Jesus and faithful souls united to him form one mystical body, of which Jesus is the head, and we are the members.

Similarly, the life of Christ and that of God are the same—he himself points that out in the same discourse—so that our union with Christ is a union with God himself, and our share in the life of Jesus is a share in the life even of God. Here are his own words: "That they may be one, Holy Father, as we also are . . that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us . . . that they may be one, as we also are one. I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one."[1]

This fundamental truth, that Christ is the Head of the mystical body of the Church, and that we are his members, is one of those truths which are often emphasised in Holy Scripture, especially by S Paul. He writes to the faithful at Corinth: "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God."[2]

He says to the Ephesians: "God hath made him head over all the Church." We ought then in practising the truth of the Gospel, to grow and develop in every way in Jesus Christ, who is our chief and our head.[3]

Similarly, he repeats to the Colossians that Christ is the head of the body of the Church. . . . "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally"; we are filled in him and by him alone, and not only we but the angels themselves exist only in him and by him, for it is he who is the chief of all the principalities and powers of heaven; it is he who gives them all that they possess of grace and glory.[4]

It is not then only a position of *pre-eminence* or of central unity that Holy Scripture assigns to Christ over everyone in the whole Church, as befits the "*firstborn* amongst many

[1] Ut sint unum, sicut et nos, Pater sancte . . . Ut omnes sint unum, sicut tu, Pater, in me et ego in te, ut et ipsi in nobis unum sint . . . ut sint unum sicut et nos unum sumus. Ego in eis, et tu in me: ut sint consummati in unum (Jo. xvii, 11-23).

[2] Omnis viri caput Christus est . . . caput vero Christi Deus (1 Cor. xi, 3).

[3] Ipsum dedit caput supra omnem Ecclesiam (Eph. i, 22). Veritatem autem facientes in charitate, crescamus in illo per omnia qui est caput Christus (Eph. iv, 15).

[4] In ipso inhabitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter: et estis in illo repleti, qui est caput omnis principatus et potestatis (Coloss. ii, 9, 10).

brethren,"[1] and the "first begotten of the dead,"[2] but even the position of a *life-giving source*, the waters of which bring life and movement to its members. Thus the Council of Trent has not hesitated to proclaim as essential this vital stream, which flows from Jesus Christ over each and all of the faithful: "*Ipse Christus Jesus*," it says, "*tanquam caput in membra . . . in ipsos justificatos jugiter virtutem influit.*"[3]

But let us notice the *double role* of Christ, as God and man simultaneously, in this animating stream which comes to our souls. Since he is man, he alone is able to be the head of a mystical body made of men, since the head and the members must have the same nature. But since he is God, he alone can bring us divine life. Now this life, which is that of the entire Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is called by appropriation the work of the Holy Ghost, because the bestowing of it on our souls is a work of love, although it is common, like all works *ad extra*, to the three divine Persons. It is called also the *life of Jesus*, who possessed it already abundantly before he gave us a share in it by his merits. Accordingly, the language of all theologians classes together these three expressions: life of Jesus in our souls, life of God in Jesus, and the Holy Ghost or sanctifying Spirit. They are then only three different phases of the same Truth.

Since this union with Christ is not imaginary but real, both physically and morally, several DEDUCTIONS of the highest importance are made from it. The first is as follows:

(*a*) We are ACCESSORY TO THE FULNESS OF CHRIST, and work with him. It is true, Jesus had no need of members for the exercise of his vital powers, any more than God needed adopted children. And yet Jesus has willed to have men as members and helpers, just as God has willed to have them as adopted children, not only in name and legal form, but in true reality: *ut filii Dei nominemur et simus* (1 Jo. iii, 1).

Moreover, the Creator did not need his creatures, for he is able to perform by his own power all that he has assigned to these his assistants. And if he has willed to give them not a nominal but a real share as true causes, however

[1] Primogenitus in multis fratribus (Rom. viii, 29).
[2] Primogenitus mortuorum (Apoc. i, 5).
[3] Session VI, c. viii.

subordinate, it is not through needing their help, S Thomas tells us, but through his great power and wonderful generosity which has willed to link mankind to his far-sighted plans and raise them to the dignity of coadjutors.[1]

Such is the case in the work of the Redemption. He wished to have apostles to win the world, just as he wished for saints to sanctify it. Although the Passion of our Lord has in itself infinite power and merit, it has to be applied, and in a certain sense completed, through the centuries, and in every country of the world right up to the end of time. It is this that S Paul means when he says to the Colossians: "I Paul now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for his body, which is the Church.[2]

(*b*) Therefore, Christ by his own merits has won for us the POWER OF GAINING MERIT for ourselves and of satisfying his justice.[3] In co-operating with his grace we become the workers of our own salvation, and we earn in justice the crown of heaven.[4]

All our meritorious acts, when united to the sufferings and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, have, then, great satisfactory value both for us and for those souls for whom we offer them. Nay, more, God has commanded us to exercise, rather than to allow to remain idle, this power of gaining merit by our good works. It is the essential condition of our spiritual life.

Our Lord cursed the barren fig-tree[5]; he threatened

[1] (Deus) non propter defectum suæ virtutis, sed propter abundantiam suæ bonitatis, dignitatem causalitatis etiam creaturis communicat (1a, Q. 22, a. 3). Ex virtute enim agentis est, quod suo effectui det virtutem agendi (1a, Q. 105, a. 5).

[2] Ego Paulus, minister, qui nunc gaudeo in passionibus pro vobis, et adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi, in carne mea, pro corpore ejus, quod est Ecclesia (Coloss. i, 24).

[3] Theologians thus define *merit*: "a right to a supernatural recompense for a supernatural good work, in accordance with a divine promise which guaranteed this recompense." There are two kinds: (*a*) true merit, said to be "*de condigno*" when the recompense is justly due like the payment of a just debt; (*b*) merit *de congruo* when it is due only by extreme fitness. For instance, a soldier has a right to his pay, but not a decoration, however well deserved it may be.

[4] Accipiet coronam vitæ quam repromisit Deus diligentibus se (Jas. i, 22). The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, c. xvi) has declared that all the good deeds of the justified man are truly meritorious.

[5] Nunquam ex te nascatur fructus in sempiternum! Et arefacta est continuo ficulnea (Matt. xxi, 19).

eternal woe, on the day of judgement, to faith without good works :[1] he made self-denial the chief condition of following him.[2] In their turn the apostles proclaimed the same teaching, and S Paul, for instance, has presented eternal salvation as the reward of those who courageously share in the sufferings of our Lord : *Si tamen compatimur, sic et conglorificemur* (Rom. viii, 17). Not only do generous souls strive to suffer with Christ, but they suffer joyfully and, like S Paul, delight to suffer for him : *Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra* (2 Cor. vii, 4).

Compare this noble and generous doctrine with that of some Protestants, who do not hesitate to say that Christ, having suffered infinitely for us, requires nothing further, and that we need not drink his chalice! Or else that since the grace of sanctification is only an *outer garment* to cover our sins, and there is no need to change interiorly and cleanse our souls, we need only make use of the merits of Christ without adding any of our own. Is not this false worship of the unfailing power of Christ's merits a lame excuse for laziness ?

Indeed, we must make use of the merits and sanctity of our Lord Jesus Christ ; it is our first duty ; but without fulfilling the second, which is to gain merit ourselves by his grace, we shall only render void the merits of Christ, who has no intention of saving us without our co-operation, or of sanctifying us against our will.

With this Protestant heresy, we can compare the opinion of the Quietists or semi-Quietists of whom we have spoken at greater length elsewhere,[3] an opinion which they have expressed in these thoroughly ambiguous formulas : " What must I do to correspond to the will of God ? Nothing. God does everything ; I have only to give myself to him, let myself go, and let him work in me."[4] " To leave Jesus Christ to love God in us and through us, that is all that is necessary."[5] " It is more perfect, sweeter and more fitting, to allow ourselves to be supported by Jesus."[6]

[1] Discedite a me maledicti . . . (Matt. xxv, 41).

[2] Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum . . . (Matt. xvi, 24).

[3] *Mystical Phenomena*, pp 132 ff.

[4] *La vie intérieure simplifiée*, p. 180, 305, etc.

[5] *La voie*, p. 9.

[6] *L'amitié avec Jesus*, p. 42.

(*c*) The third result of our union with Christ is the doctrine of the COMMUNION OF SAINTS. Having only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, as S Paul tells us (*unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma*, Eph. iv, 5), Holy Church forms one mystical body, the members of which are the saints in heaven, the souls in purgatory, and the faithful on earth: the Church Militant, the Church Triumphant, together with the Church Suffering, form only one family.

We are then all brothers in Jesus Christ. Henceforth there are neither Jews nor Greeks, neither free men nor slaves, as S Paul says.[1] It follows that we are all *united*; each member obtains help from the head and from the entire body. The head has similar interests to those of the members, and our Lord could say that he considered the good that was done for the humblest of his members as done to himself: "Amen I say to you as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."[2]

S Paul was only putting into practice this teaching when he said to the faithful at Corinth: "Who is weak and I am not weak?"[3] And he gave the same reason: "If one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it."[4]

From earth to heaven, and to the souls in purgatory, the same unity ought to prevail, and we can confidently—although there is only one mediator—invoke the powerful intercession of all the Saints, above all of the Queen of Saints, the Blessed Virgin Mary, alike for ourselves and for those of our brethren who are struggling on earth, or who are still suffering in purgatory.

Such is the faith of our *credo* in the complete unity of all the members of Holy Church: *Et unam sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.*

(*d*) The final moral conclusions derived from this fundamental teaching sum up OUR DUTIES TO OUR LORD, and they may be divided into three. 1. Our first duty is to *honour* him, as he deserves, and the honour which is due to

[1] Non enim est distinctio Judæi et Græci: nam idem Dominus omnium (Rom. x, 12). Etenim in uno Spiritu omnes nos in unum corpus baptizati sumus, sive Judæi, sive Gentiles, sive servi, sive liberi: et omnes in uno Spiritu potati sumus (1 Cor. xii, 13).

[2] Amen dico vobis, quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis (Matt. xxv, 40).

[3] Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? (2 Cor. xi, 29).

[4] Si quid patitur unum membrum, compatiuntur omnia membra (1 Cor. xii, 26).

him is *latria* or adoration. 2. Our second is to *love* him with a love which does not stop short of the sacrifice of self, as the members sacrifice themselves to save the head. 3. Finally, we ought to *remain united to him*, that is, to live in his spirit and his life, as members live in the life of their head and obey him in everything. This is not merely an ideal, but it is the strict duty of every good Christian.

ARTICLE II

Prayer in Christ Jesus

Prayer and the holy desire for union with Christ are the chief means of acquiring or strengthening this union in our souls. It is so powerful and so efficacious that it can even take the place of baptism in case of necessity: this is what is called the baptism of *desire*. These holy desires have been wonderfully expressed in the well-known words of the Oratory and of S Sulpice: *O Jesu, vivens in Maria, veni et vive!* "O Jesus who livest in all thy Saints and especially in the Virgin Mary, come and live in thy servants, in the truth of thy virtues and in the perfection of thy life!" We must then clearly grasp the NATURE AND POWER of Christian prayer. Prayer, in general, is the raising of our mind and our heart to God; show him our needs, and by prayer ask his help with confidence and humility. It is, then, an act of the virtue of religion which binds the creature to his creator, and it is the most mysterious of all its acts, because it is able to obtain from God by our supplications all that we wish.

Is this an unreasonable and impossible claim? Not at all (S Thomas, Q 83, a. 2 ad 1), because it implies no change in God, who has foreseen our prayer through all eternity, and it affords him an opportunity to exercise his most sublime prerogative—that of goodness and pity. Not only has he foreseen our requests, but he expects them, and waits for them: it is the will of God that we should give him by our prayers an occasion to show his goodness. On the other hand, here is its very simple *process*.

God loves and delights in truth above all things, and as soon as man has realised that he is but insignificant and worthless in himself, that all he has comes from God (*quid habes quod non accepisti?* 1 Cor. iv, 7)—since God is the

fulness of life and the inexhaustible source of all good—as soon as man has recognised this fundamental truth and made this humble avowal, immediately the heart of God opens and pours abundance of grace into his poor and insignificant soul. In fine, our prayer is perfect and powerful in proportion to the realisation of our own nothingness and of the goodness of God who can remedy it.

It is thus, says Holy Scripture, that the prayer of the humble has the power of reaching Heaven, *Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit* (Eccli. xxxv, 21), and that God never despises a humble and contrite heart (*Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despicies* (Ps. l, 19). On the other hand, he hates the proud, *Odivit anima mea . . . pauperem superbum* (Eccli. xxv, 3, 4), and rejects them, *Superbis resistit* (Jas. iv, 6).

Such is the natural and normal power of prayer when it is well exercised. But when can man, a sinner, be certain that his prayer is well prayed, that it is humble, trusting, fervent, and truly worthy of being granted? Must we live in this everlasting uncertainty? If we can count only on our good dispositions and our own merits, then we may despair of our salvation.

It is here fortunately that the *mediation* of our Lord enters in. In his name, and through his infinite merits, we can dare to ask the Father and trust confidently that we shall obtain our requests from his infinite goodness.

On this main point the divine promise so often reiterated in Holy Scripture is positive and without reservation. "*All* that you ask the Father in my name," thus speaks our divine Master, "he will give it to you," *Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo dabit vobis* (Jo. xvi, 23). We must have faith, for everything is possible to him who believes, says S Mark: *omnia possibilia sunt credenti* (Mark xi, 22), and he repeats insistently: *Omnia quæcumque orantes petitis, credite quia accipietis et eveniet vobis* (*ibid.* 24). Even "whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, it shall be done" (*ibid.* 23). What more expressive words could be used?

This is the law laid down by God the Father. The mediation of his divine Son is both necessary and unfailing. It is intended for heaven and for earth, because all the Saints in glory, and all the Angels, adore only through

him, *Per quem laudant Angeli atque Archangeli*, as we say in the Preface of the mass.

This doctrine of our holy religion is repeated in a thousand forms in Holy Scripture. Jesus Christ is the head, and we are the members: all our life comes from him. He is the stem of the vine, and we are its branches which draw their life only through the stem. He is the good olive tree on which we are grafted. He is the sovereign priest of the new law, infinitely superior to Aaron; S Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, wonderfully extols this priesthood of Jesus Christ, the sole mediator between God and men, through whose hands all our prayers ought to pass and be offered to God: *Non enim habemus pontificem qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris. . . .* "Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." *Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ . . . et gratiam inveniamur in auxilio opportuno.* He was heard for his reverence, *exauditus est pro sua reverentia* (Hebr. iv, 14, *et seq.*, v, 7).

Not only is he always heard, in fact, as he tells us himself: *quia semper me audis* (Jo. xi, 42), but it is impossible that he should not be heard, because he is the beloved Son in whom the Father is always well pleased: *Hic est filius meus dilectus in quo mihi bene complacui* (Matt. xvii, 5). He is the Son of God, of the same substance, equal to the Father, and God himself. And moreover, he speaks to his Father by the eloquent tongue of his wounds and by the beatings of his heart, because he does not cease thinking of us and praying for us, *Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis* (Hebr. vii, 25).

Oh, how such prayers, infinitely more perfect than the prayers of all the Saints or of all the Seraphim and Cherubim united together, wonderfully atone for the poverty and insignificance of our prayers, which are so lacking in fervour, humility and confidence! His prayer adds to ours a special power, which is almost comparable to the power *ex opere operato* of the sacraments.

We understand now why the Church never fails to end her prayers with the liturgical, quasi-sacramental form, *per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum*, which appears always and everywhere in her Offices, because in those words lie the strength and omnipotence of Christian prayer.

The Christian ought never to place himself in the presence of God save when *clothed* with Jesus Christ, as S Paul says, *Christum induistis . . . Induite novum hominem. . . .* (Galat. iii, 27; Eph. iv, 24).

Ah! how would he who is but dust and ashes, dare otherwise to approach the thrice holy majesty of God, and speak to him? *Loquar ad Deum meum cum sim pulvis et cinis?* (Gen. xviii, 27). But justified by Jesus Christ, sharing in his virtues and merits, in spite of our insignificance and nothingness, we dare to have this confidence, and we are emboldened to call God our Father, and it is the Holy Ghost himself, S Paul says, the Spirit of Jesus living in us, who utters this prayer for us himself "with unspeakable groanings": *Ipse Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus . . . in quo clamamus: Abba, Pater* (Rom. viii, 26, 15).

Our Lord himself revealed this secret to us. In teaching us the way in which to pray to God, he makes each one say, not "My Father," but "Our Father"; and he teaches us not to appear before God as individuals, but as members of a great Christian family, of which he is the head, and we are the members, sharing in his name, through his power, *in Christo, per Christum, cum Christo: per ipsum, cum ipso, in ipso.*

This is a wonderful means of obtaining grace, put in our hands by the Church; but it is not the only, nor the chief means, for she offers us the sacraments as well.

ARTICLE III

The Sacraments of the Church

Whereas Christian prayer is an internal and invisible means of applying the grace and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ in our souls, the sacraments which he has instituted are the external and visible channels of the same grace. But there is no useless repetition in them; on the contrary, they are extremely useful, and some are absolutely necessary. They are the fountains of living water of which the Prophet Isaias spoke: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains," *Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris* (Isa. xii, 2, 3).

First of all let us explain THEIR NATURE. According to

all the theologians, the sacraments are *permanent visible signs appointed by our Lord to signify grace and to produce it in our souls.*

They are *visible* signs easy to understand; thus in baptism the washing of the body in the holy water is a sign or symbol of the purification of a soul stained with original sin. S Augustine terms them visible forms of invisible grace, *invisibilis gratiæ visibilis forma.*

It is our Lord, as God, who instituted the sacraments, because it is the right of God alone to give grace, and to connect it with certain signs in an habitual and permanent manner.

It is the visible sign which produces grace in a soul, but it produces it only by virtue of its character as an instrument in the hands of God, as a pen produces visible writing which expresses invisible and abstract ideas, only by the power of the hand and brain which uses it.

If God himself, by means of the water of baptism, produces the grace of a new birth, it is not due then to the faith of the baptised person, to sorrow for sins, to fervour, or to any personal merits. These act only as a suitable preparation if the candidate for baptism is an adult, and these dispositions themselves are rather negative in the sense that it is sufficient for the efficacy of sacraments if the grace of God does not find any obstacle, any hindrance, which would render a person unworthy, for instance, a positive refusal to accept it or to prepare worthily.

That is why a child can be baptised before the age of reason, because it is still unable to refuse so great a grace, and its consent is assumed.

The VALUE of the sacraments is therefore evident, since by a wonderful dispensation of the mercy of God, the flow of grace does not depend on our personal merits, but on the merits arising from the Passion of our Lord.

If we could count only on the power of our own merits and fervour, we should never be sure, for instance, that we had been truly baptised or forgiven, or made priests and ministers of Jesus Christ. Our whole lives would be passed in unendurable anguish, not only on account of scruples, but on account of well-founded doubts.

But the employment of an outward and visible sign, the fitting reception of a religious rite, easy to prove, alone can free us from doubt and assure us that we are truly baptised,

forgiven, ordained priests, consecrated bishops and the like. This assurance is given to us not only in the internal forum of conscience, but publicly in the eyes of the whole Church ; for the Church must be able to distinguish her children from infidels, her true ministers from those who are false, etc.

That is why S Augustine wrote, " There is no religion, true or false, which can dispense with external rites and visible sacraments if it wishes to band together and unite all its members in one body."[1]

This unfailing power of the sacraments to produce grace in our souls through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, apart from our own—provided that we do not hinder it by our bad dispositions—has been called by theologians *ex opere operato*, to distinguish it from graces granted *ex opere operantis*. These last which are given in proportion to our fervour and good dispositions when, for example, we receive the sacraments, only increase and supplement the former. It follows then that the better we are prepared to receive a sacrament, the more grace and fruit it produces in our souls.

Thus the mercy and justice of God are wonderfully allied, because he considers not only our own poor merits, but above all our great and pitiable need, which is supplied by the infinite merits of Jesus Christ.

The life of grace and Christian perfection has thus become, through divine assistance, truly possible for all men of good will. Hence how false is the HERESY OF THE CALVINISTS and other Protestants who attribute to the sacraments of the new law only a moral efficacy, like that of preaching, or of the performance of ceremonies, which appeal only to faith and to emotion, without producing anything of themselves in the soul. Thus they completely destroy the Catholic theory which we have just explained.

It is true that the adult who receives baptism makes an act of faith by consenting to receive it with proper dispositions. He makes also acts of hope, charity and humility ; but if he had only his own merits and fervour to depend upon in order to receive the grace of new birth and become a Christian, how would he feel certain of the validity of his baptism ?

There is, too, in baptism, another grace which Protestants deny, and that is the particular grace of each sacrament.

[1] In nullum nomen religionis, seu veræ seu falsæ, coagulari homines possunt, nisi aliquo signaculorum vel sacramentorum visibilium consortio colligentur (S Augustine, *Contra Faust.*, l. XIX, c. ii.)

The Council of Trent has anathematised those who say that all the virtue of the sacrament lies in arousing and developing the faith of the candidate: *Si quis dixerit hæc sacramenta propter solam fidem nutriendam instituta fuisse, A.S.* (Sess. VII, can. v.) In the eighth canon it even sanctions the theological expression *ex opere operato: Si quis dixerit per ipsa Novæ Legis sacramenta ex opere operato non conferri gratiam, sed solam fidem divinæ promissionis ad gratiam consequendam sufficere, anathema sit.* This is the Catholic Faith.

With regard to the NUMBER of the sacraments, the Council, sanctioning the ancient tradition of the Church, gives seven: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Order, and Matrimony.

Just as in the natural order the child must be born, grow, learn to walk, be healed if it falls sick, prepare for death, and, if it become full-grown, perpetuate its species and hand on its social powers, so it is in the supernatural life. In Baptism we are born, we grow by Confirmation, are strengthened by the Holy Eucharist, healed by Penance and fortified for the last journey by Extreme Unction. Finally, the race is perpetuated by Matrimony, and the priestly functions handed down by Holy Order.

This is the sum of the supernatural help given by our Lord Jesus Christ for the Christian life of man and for the social life of the Church.[1]

However, like the creation of the universe, so the redemption possesses a richness of detail which is extensive and greatly varied. By the side of, or rather in addition to, the sacraments instituted by our Lord, which work, like the creating word of God, *ex opere operato*, and which are necessary to salvation, the Church has added other visible signs which work only *ex opere operantis* and by simple devotion.

Theologians have termed these SACRAMENTALS because they have a certain resemblance to the sacraments. The best known and the most used are the *Sign of the Cross*, *Holy Water* and *exorcisms*, certain *sacred prayers*, like the *Lord's Prayer* and the *Rosary*, certain *special blessings* attached to certain objects, as, for example, the *Agnus Dei*, *rosaries*, and the like.

[1] For more details, see any course of *Moral Theology* on the sacraments.

The *general effects* of the sacramentals are, to enlighten our faith, to increase our hope and confidence in God, to inflame our hearts with his holy love, as for example when we make the sign of the Cross devoutly, and to obtain from the divine goodness, by uniting our prayers to those of our Lord or the Church, graces which our individual prayers would never obtain for us on their own merits.

The *particular effects* of each of these sacramentals vary with their nature and the intention of the Church in instituting them.

Thus, exorcisms by virtue of Holy Water, of the sign of the Cross, and of other rites established for this purpose, are able to drive away the devil from the body of one possessed. Our Lord expressly and at various times gave this power to his apostles and to his Church, therefore she has the right to make use of it, and has done so very often, successfully ; it is because this power does not operate *ex opere operato*, that it is not always successful, for its efficacy depends in large measure on the dispositions and fervour of the people who make use of it.

Holy Water and prayer before blessed crucifixes can remit the punishment due to venial sins, by arousing in our hearts sentiments of sorrow and of the love of God, to which this remission is attached.

The saying of the Rosary on blessed and indulgenced beads can also gain for us certain indulgences, that is, the remission of temporal punishment which remains due to our sins even after absolution has been given by the priest.

Finally, certain objects specially blessed, e.g. the candles at Candlemas, or the Agnus Dei, while stimulating our faith and our confidence in God, can gain special graces for us, even temporal graces ; in the same way the relics of the saints may restore our health by their application. But there are certain abuses to be avoided, against which the Church has not ceased to protest, as the Council of Baltimore did in 1886.

Two ABUSES of sacramentals are to be guarded against—an excessive, and an insufficient use of them. On the one hand one may despise them, or not give them all the respect required by the authority of the Church which has instituted them and encourages their use. Unless one is careful, this contempt will extend to all supernatural things, questioning

them more or less openly. It is the logical outcome of a rationalistic spirit.

Excess, on the other hand, lies in attaching to religious rites an importance, and above all a power, which the Church never intended them to have. The Church has never suggested that material objects, even when blessed, can have of themselves and without the good dispositions of those who use them, any supernatural results, whether moral or physical. Such a belief would be unreasonable, and the confidence given would be blind and similar to the superstitions of pagans, who still put their trust in the power of talismans, amulets and charms.

The Council expressly commands pastors to enlighten the faithful, and to keep them from these grave abuses, which point to ignorance on religious matters and often conceal moral laxity. To conceal this laxity, and encourage it by religious practices, is to call down with two-fold force the anger of God.

CHAPTER III

The Return to Grace

BEWARE, says S Paul, of stifling or extinguishing the Holy Spirit in your souls: *Nolite extinguere Spiritum Sanctum* (1 Thess. v, 19). The essence of the spiritual life which the Holy Ghost has placed in our souls is, like all life, very delicate and fragile. It can be mortally wounded, or perish through neglect. We must study then the *loss of grace* through sin, and its *recovery* through repentance.

ARTICLE I

Loss of Grace

Mortal sin kills the soul immediately, and the neglect or repetition of *deliberate venial sin* leads to paralysis and lifelessness in the soul, gradually preparing it for death by a fall into mortal sin.

Let us examine carefully these two different cases.

I. That MORTAL SIN banishes sanctifying grace, and consequently destroys all the virtues and gifts in the soul, is an indisputable truth in theology. It has been defined by the Council of Trent,[1] and S Thomas explains it very clearly by this comparison. Charity is a virtue infused by God, just as light is given by the sun. As soon as an obstacle comes in front of that light there is darkness. Likewise, when mortal sin appears, the love of God no longer glows in the soul of the sinner (2a 2æ, Q. 24, a. 12). Mortal sin, then, destroys charity, and takes away sanctifying grace.

The Gospels advise the just, therefore, to watch and pray lest they fall into temptation, and warn them not to be presumptuous, for the reckless fall into sin: *qui se existimat stare videat ne cadat* (1 Cor. x, 12). The examples of the

[1] *Si quis hominem semel justificatum dixerit amplius peccare non posse, neque gratiam amittere: atque ideo eum qui labitur et peccat, nunquam vere fuisse justificatum, anathema sit"* (Session VI, *De Justificatione*, can. xxiii et can. xxvii).

celebrated falls of Solomon, David, S Peter himself, and many others, are given especially to keep us watchful and humble, for "the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh weak" (Matt. xxvi, 41).

II. The other evil which leads indirectly to the same disaster, is TEPIDITY or neglect, that is, that habitual state of soul which leads us to say of a Christian that he is neither good nor bad, neither hot nor cold. He avoids mortal sin, but dallies fearlessly, so to speak, with venial sin.

The terrible gravity of this state is revealed to us by the biting words of S John to the bishop of Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold, or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth."[1]

To understand the truth and justice of this terrible pronouncement, we must remember the main reasons for which we ought to fear venial sin more than all the misfortunes of this life, even death itself.

1. *All sin*, even simple venial sin, is above all an offence against the majesty of God, and a slight to the Holy Ghost. But what evil in this world can be compared with that of offending God, of disobeying and slighting him? What loss of liberty can be compared with that? Should we not then be prepared to lose and suffer everything rather than to render ourselves thus guilty?

The evil of venial sin is increased and rendered more detestable when it is *deliberately committed* in lightness of heart on the ground that we shall not be punished eternally. It is like a premeditated injury to the goodness of God, truly unworthy of a well-born soul, and still more unworthy of a child of God with respect to the most holy and the most loving of all fathers. It is an insult to take advantage of the goodness of God by offending him yet further.

In coarse and ignorant souls, it is true, the evil is material rather than formal, because they have the excuse that they do not understand what they are doing, nor how ugly is their conduct. But with enlightened Christians, above all

[1] Scio opera tua, quia neque frigidus es, neque calidus; utinam frigidus esses, aut calidus! Sed quia tepidus es, et nec frigidus, nec calidus, incipiam te evomere de ore meo (Apoc. iii, 15, 16).

with those who ought to aspire to the perfection of their state, like religious and priests, there is no excuse, and every venial sin deliberately committed is not only an offence against God who rules us, but an act of ingratitude to his merciful goodness, which has chosen us from so many others to live a higher life, privileged by close union with his Divine Heart.

2. But if such acts of ingratitude are increased and developed into that *habitual state* of lukewarmness which we have just described, we must expect to find the love of God for us changing into anger. He might end by checking the flow of his graces, since they were despised, and then, deserted by him, we should fall from venial into mortal sin. The Holy Spirit warns us in no uncertain words: "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little," *Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet* (Eccli. xix, 1).

3. Once the merciful goodness of God, after being constantly insulted, has "vomited out of its mouth" and rejected the ungrateful soul, there is danger of a *final state of hardness of heart.*

It is said of Pharaoh that, to punish him, God hardened his heart, *induravit Dominus cor ejus* (Exod. ix, 12; x, 27; xiv, 8). In this state one runs the risk of mistaking mortal sin for venial sin; conscience is blunted, the heart hardened, and the soul resembles a disabled boat, in which the compass cannot direct its course through the storm. Hence the rejection of actual grace through venial sin may be the first beginning of reprobation.

Even if we were sure of being able to avoid so great a misfortune—and one is never sure—certainly venial sin weakens the divine friendship and cools its intimacy. What a loss is that of intimacy with God! It obstructs and checks the flow of actual grace, with the result that our spiritual life languishes and grows tepid. What can be sadder than this failure of all our efforts for good?

Then, once again, let us be on our guard, lest we extinguish the Spirit of God in us, *Nolite extinguere Spiritum Sanctum!* There is no greater evil.

ARTICLE II

The Recovery of Grace through Repentance.

However, even if sanctifying grace is extinguished in a soul and its supernatural essence destroyed, all is not lost. The sinner ought never to despair, because grace can be revived in him, and this *injured organism can be given fresh life* by the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. S John tells us: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.[1]

It is the VIRTUE OF PENITENCE—on which the sacrament[2] puts its official seal by the absolution of the priest—which brings about this spiritual resurrection. We will only speak here of the virtue of penitence which we omitted when classifying the infused virtues. We will show its *nature* and *necessity*.

I. ITS NATURE.—The virtue of penitence is subsidiary to the virtue of religion just as the latter is subsidiary to the virtue of justice. In ordinary language, to repent is to regret having done an action, whether good or bad; but repentance in this case concerns a culpable action, both because it is bad and because it is an offence against God.

We may then define penitence *as a supernatural and moral virtue which leads the guilty to detest their own sins, because they offend God, accompanied by a firm resolution never to offend him again, and to make satisfaction to his justice.* Let us explain the five divisions of this definition.

1. We say, first, that this virtue is *supernatural*, at least in the case of all Christians, whether it is given them in baptism or whether it is exercised under the impulsion of actual grace, and for a supernatural motive which faith dictates. This act is salutary and meritorious when it is performed in a state of grace.

[1] Filioli mei . . . si quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum justum. Et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris; non pro nostris autem tantum, sed etiam pro totius mundi (1 Jo. ii, 1-2).

[2] On the nature and necessity of the *sacrament* of penance for the remission of mortal sins—as well as for its usefulness in the case of venial sin—see any treatise on *Moral Theology*.

2. We add that this virtue makes us detest our *own* sins, because it is only in a very large and extended use of the term that we can be said to be " penitent " for the sins of others ; we can make *satisfaction* for them, after the example of our Lord who willed to . . . atone for the sins of the whole world (cf. S Thomas, iii, Q. 15, a. 1, ad 5).

3. Thirdly, and here is the main point, the reason for our repentance ought to be the *offence* which the sin has given to God, and by no means regret for the temporal evils which it is liable to bring about. These temporal motives are not sufficient for a true act of repentance, although they may be present in addition, or prepare the way for true repentance. We must hate sin because it is an evil which separates us from God, displeases him, offends him, and leaves us exposed to the punishments of the life hereafter, and therefore we must be sorry for it as an insult to God.

That this sorrow should affect our *feelings*, move our hearts, and cause us to shed tears, is not necessary. It must affect our *will*, and cause a firm resolution to change our lives in the future, and to make satisfaction to God's justice for what has been wrong in the past.

4. Fourthly, if our repentance is sincere, it will be accompanied by a *firm resolution* never to fall back into sin, and by a strong desire to effect a *change in our lives* ; but it is evident that a change of life without any sorrow for the sin committed will not suffice for true repentance, as Luther and the Protestants claim. It is not thus that Holy Scripture shows us the true penitent.

When the Psalmist cries out : " A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit : a contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise " *Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus ; cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies* (Ps. l, 19), he clearly shows us that it is the sacrifice of the heart that God demands and requires, the sacrifice of a heart overcome with grief, *nishbar* ; a word that the psalmist repeats twice —or a heart weighed down with sorrow, *nidkeh* (cf. Daniel iii, 39, 40).

Indeed, the prophet says too : " Be converted," *convertimini*, but he adds immediately, " and do penance for all your iniquities," *et agite pœnitentiam ab omnibus iniquitatibus vestris* (Ezech. xviii, 30). Change of life then is not sufficient. Moreover, it would be impossible to change without regretting the past, and without considering it bad. True peni-

tence demands hatred for the sin committed; and no one would dare to ask pardon of another man without making an apology and expressing regret. In this case it is God who is insulted, and the sinner must begin by showing sorrow for sin committed before he asks forgiveness.

5. If this sorrow is truly sincere, the desire to make amends and to make *satisfaction*, that is, just compensation for the wrong done and the injustice committed, will arise naturally in a contrite heart. Then the repentance will be complete. Undoubtedly God could dispense us from making amends, and free us from the penalties we have incurred, but his wisdom, his justice, and even his holiness, demand that the guilty one should suffer a penalty and chastisement —at least as a general rule. And just as it is not in the power of the guilty to dispense himself, but in God's hands alone, we should keep ourselves always ready to endure the providential misfortunes which God sends us, according to the example of the Psalmist, who had the memory of his sin always before him: *peccatum meum contra me est semper*, in order that he might expiate it on every occasion (Ps. l, 5). This keen and habitual feeling of sorrow, provided that it has nothing scrupulous or harassing in it, is one of the most efficacious means of increasing humility and all the virtues of the interior life. It is astonishing sometimes to hear preachers declaring that we ought to *forget the past* when we have sinned, whereas the holy King David could never forget it.

II. This aspect of Christian penitence ought to be sufficient to show us the NECESSITY for it. There is nothing more just, more reasonable for the sinner, and that explains why the value of penitence has been so often and so emphatically dwelt upon in Holy Scripture. To prepare the way for the coming of the Messias, the holy precursor began by preaching repentance on the banks of the Jordan, and he called his baptism the baptism of penance. Our Lord himself began his ministry by preaching repentance: *Exinde cæpit Jesus prædicare et dicere: Pœnitentiam agite: appropinquavit enim regnum cælorum* (Matt. iv, 17). Moreover, he threatens with eternal damnation all who refuse to do penance: *Si pœnitentiam non egeritis, omnes similiter peribitis* (Luke xiii, 5). And S Peter, in his first discourse, says: "Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your

sins may be blotted out " : *Pœnitemini igitur et convertimini ut deleantur peccata vestra* (Act. iii, 19).

Before giving us the precept of penance, our Divine Model willed to suffer voluntarily to set us an example. He completely atoned for our sins : in the crib, in the workshop at Nazareth, where he led a life of hardship ; in Gethsemani, where he shed tears of blood for the sins of the world ; in the Prætorium, and on Calvary, where he gave his body to torture and death.

Let no one say that our Lord has freed us from the obligation of doing penance, by himself atoning fully for our sins. S Paul already replied to this objection : I fill up in my flesh what is wanting to the sufferings of Jesus Christ, *Adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi in carne mea* (Colos. i, 24). There is wanting, in fact, to the atonement of Christ, its particular application to each one of us. And if this application, by the merciful goodness of our Saviour, makes our satisfaction possible, seeing the infinite gravity of our offence against God, it does not dispense with it completely.

The infinite merits of the Passion of our Saviour will not then be given to us, unless we share, as far as we can, in his sufferings. That is why all the Saints had such regard for chastisement of the body. There is not one amongst them who did not practise it to the point of heroism ; not one who did not accept with love and a penitential spirit all the trials of this life ; not one who did not add to the trials sent by Providence voluntary mortifications which sometimes astonish us. They knew the incalculable value of Christian suffering when it is united in love, and offered in a penitential spirit, with Jesus suffering for us.

Penitence sets us, the guilty ones, free ; it breaks the chains of the devil and restores to us our holy liberty as children of God ; and with pardon upon this earth it gives us the pledge of eternal glory, according to the words of S Cyprian : *Non solum veniam Dei meretur, sed et gloriam.*

It is thus that sanctifying grace, after its destruction by sin, revives again in the soul, and with it all the train of infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, which constitute, as we have said, the supernatural organism of the Christian life.

PART IV

PART IV

General Means of Perfection or Spiritual Exercises

WE first studied the *goal* towards which we ought to tend, or the ideal of Christian perfection ; then we treated of the *obstacles* which the soul may meet either within or without itself ; and, lastly, of the *supernatural helps* which the grace of God puts at our disposition to counterbalance the obstacles. We must now speak of the *means* to be employed for arriving at the goal, and first of those general means of perfection which are called *spiritual exercises.*

This word " exercises," a classic expression since S Ignatius, is most expressive, for it indicates that personal activity is its essential character, its dominant note, and gives it all its merit and success. On the other hand, in the mystical states, it is passivity under God's action which is the dominant note or the mainspring of the interior life. Although they are bound closely together, for there is no hiatus in the works of creation, we have here two perfectly distinct worlds, *two ways* calling for very different methods of direction, the confusion of which has so often ended in the error of quietism, as we explained at some length in our Mystical Theology.

Now spiritual exercises are of two kinds : some are wholly interior, such as *mental prayer* and *examination* of conscience ; other supposes the exterior unfolding of our activity, such as *confession, frequent communion, spiritual reading, particular devotions,* a *Rule of Life,* and, lastly, the use of spiritual *direction.*

We shall study these more or less briefly according to their relative importance, without pretending to exhaust subjects which are infinite, and would take volumes to explain. Sufficient for us to trace here the general lines.

We shall begin by *prayer,* which is the corner-stone and the mainspring of all spiritual life.

CHAPTER I

Mental Prayer

WE shall set forth its *notion*, its *kinds*, its *excellence* and *necessity*, its various *methods*, its *preparation* overnight, and its *prolongation* during the whole day by the practice of the Presence of God. We shall speak afterwards of the *difficulties* which there are to encounter, chiefly distractions and dryness.

ARTICLE I

The Nature and Degrees of Mental Prayer.

Although the words prayer and petition have much the same meaning, it is preferable to keep the word prayer for that richer and more complete raising of the mind to God, which, without excluding petition for help in all our needs both spiritual and temporal, precedes and follows it by considerations and affections, in which all our faculties, both of the intellect and the senses, are exercised one by one or simultaneously.

It might even be said that its PRINCIPAL OBJECT is no longer simple petition, but rather a more and more perfect knowledge, love, and imitation of God in the divine model, our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore a more and more intimate union of our life with his. If a petition be added to it, it is rather one that this Kingdom of God in us, and in souls, may be expanded and show itself more and more on the earth, while waiting for its glorious consummation in heaven: *adveniat regnum tuum*! Every other petition, more or less interested, seems to recede or pass into the background.

The common DEFINITION of prayer is: *a lifting up of our mind and heart to God in order to know and love him more and more, to keep ourselves united to him, and to become more holy for his glory.* We might add for apostolic souls: *and to render other souls more and more holy*, for it is also

for them that we ought to sanctify ourselves, according to the example of our divine Master: *pro eis sanctifico meipsum* (Jo. xvii, 19). Not that the contemplation of God is in itself a less perfect end to attain than the active or apostolic life, but because the best and highest excellence communicates itself—*bonum est sui diffusivum*—it expands and overflows on those around it, and so communicate its riches without impoverishing itself. The creation of the world by a Being sufficient for himself, because he is infinite good and infinite happiness, and the redemption of the world by the Blood of our Saviour, are good examples of this principle.

So, to unite us to God, prayer has THREE IMPULSES: (1) that of reason by which we know him; (2) that of the affections which makes us love him; (3) the resolution of the will which makes us imitate him; and in addition, an impulse which turns us towards others to help them to sanctify themselves with us.

The enumeration of the different KINDS of prayer will help us to grasp its nature better. We propose to classify them according to their dignity or perfection, which is not always according to personal merit. This merit, as we have seen, depends on the amount of love with which we accomplish the humblest actions as well as the noblest.

(1) On the lowest rung of the ladder we find VOCAL PRAYER—a prayer not only of petition, but also of praise, admiration, humble submission and the like—expressed in forms of prayer slowly read or recited, and more or less meditated upon. It is the simplest form of prayer and that of beginners. In reading or saying them there is no need for us to produce anything original; all we have to do is to assimilate the thoughts and sentiments of another.

(2) A little higher we find MEDITATION on a given subject. Here the personal effort is greater. Freed from the bonds of formulas read or learnt by heart, he who meditates is guided simply by certain methods which teach him to develop his subject, that is, to pass from one consideration to another, logically and methodically; and then to pass from considerations to the affections, and from these to practical resolutions. But in this second grade it is still reason, and not affection, which predominates.

(3) It is in the third grade that PIOUS AFFECTIONS predominate. The mind, already convinced by argument

repeated a thousand times, gives place to the heart, which pours itself out at the Master's feet in sentiments of devotion, admiration, praise, thanksgiving, love, joy or compassion, according to the nature of the mystery upon which the meditation has been made, ending in pious colloquies with the Beloved. This is *affective prayer*.

(4) Lastly, there is a still higher rung of the ladder where everything becomes very simple. Conviction on the great Christian truths being sufficiently established long ago, the effort of reasoning is useless, and it diminishes until it is suppressed altogether. The truth being already discovered, it suffices to contemplate it with a very simple regard. It is quite useless to multiply the affections: one only affection, that of love, for example, is sufficient; and it is quite unnecessary to express this by repeated words: it is by loving God that we tell him of our love.

Such is the prayer of SIMPLE REGARD OR OF SIMPLICITY, so well described and recommended by Bossuet. It is called also *acquired contemplation*, because all the faithful can acquire it, or merit its grace and practise it, at least for a few moments, and so form a habit of it till they enter into contemplation whenever they wish: it is sufficient for them to put themselves into God's presence.[1] Great mystics, like Denis the Carthusian, have even taught the method of acquiring this kind of contemplation: *Sunt quædam industriæ ad hoc non modicum conferentes.*[2]

This acquired contemplation looks like a simple repose of mind and heart, but, in truth, the repose is not complete, for the fixity of the regard—even were it absolutely complete, which is rare—in the contemplative, demands all his power of adhesion, were it only to protect himself from allowing his mind to wander.

We are not then leaving as yet the active ways of the Christian life. In the mystical ways, on the other hand, there is much more than relaxation and repose, a passive

[1] Cf. S John of the Cross, *Œuvres*, p. 154 (French Critical ed.), where the Saint explains at great length how, by the repetition of acts, habit is contracted. "As soon as it (the habit) is acquired," he says, "as soon as the soul puts itself in the presence of God, it enters into actual possession of an obscure loving knowledge, full of peace and calm, wherein it drinks deep draughts . . . without any necessity of drawing those waters through the aqueducts of consideration . . ."

[2] Denis the Carthusian, *Opera Omnia*, Tornaci, 1892. *De contemplatione*, vol. XLI, p. 129*c*, 162*b*.

element is added—entirely passive, in which it is God who does all—a check put upon our own activity—so well described by Benedict XIV, following S Teresa and S John of the Cross. It is a divine "*touch*," passive as is the sense of touch, producing an *impressed species* infused by God into the mind and heart, communicating fresh knowledge and a new love which cannot be understood unless they have been experienced. It is a marvellous grace which no one can either acquire or merit, as S Teresa teaches, *no se puede adquirir*, any more than the gardener merits the rain from heaven which waters his garden. This is INFUSED contemplation or contemplation by infused impressed species.[1]

Now this impression of the divine in our souls is entirely passive on our side; it is not an *act*, but a *state received*, although it may be the instigator of vital acts even more energetic, and herein is the characteristic element which suffices to distinguish mystical contemplation, or contemplation by infused species, from common or active contemplation acquired by our efforts in ascetic paths.

From which it follows that one can teach or learn how to make active prayer, but the art of *making passive prayer* can neither be taught nor learnt: it would be a contradiction and this contradiction is the touch-stone of all false mystics who profess to hold the secret. S. Thomas, too, after Denis the Mystic, speaks of them as *indocibiles* or impossible to be taught. It is hard to understand their nature without having experienced them, as the Apocalypse says: "which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it": *Nemo scit nisi qui accipit.*[2]

We shall confine ourselves here to the four active prayers described above, referring the reader for the others to our treatise on Mystical Theology.

Let us note that our classification of active prayer has nothing absolute about it. There is a greater and a less participation in these four degrees, and each of them, far from being a prison from which it is forbidden to go out, is an advance on the degree below it and an invitation to mount still higher. Each stage is an open garden. One stays there as long as one finds it good to be there, and draws from it real spiritual profit. Thus the first degrees are sufficient for those who like neatly kept paths and beds in which each

[1] Cf. Benedict XIV, in the author's *Mystical Phenomena*, pp. 52 *et seq.*
[2] Apoc. ii, 17.

flower is in its place; but these paths lead on further and higher into deep and shady woods, where one is free to make excursions, and to rest, if the attraction of grace invites us, and our spiritual progress requires it.

ARTICLE II

Excellence and Necessity of Prayer

All the Saints and all the masters of the spiritual life are unanimous in extolling the excellence of the habitual practice of prayer, as a means of attaining the ideal of Christian perfection. And this unanimity is rarely encountered in regard to practices of piety, which are often cherished by some and rejected by others; this very unanimity constitutes an authority which claims attention.

Not only have all the Saints had a high estimation of prayer—or at any rate all those who have made profession of the perfect life—but they have also made a constant practice of it, consecrating to it long hours of the day, and even of the night, showing us by their example the consummate value of this exercise.

The REASON for this is easily intelligible, and we shall turn to S Thomas to expound it. "The efficient cause of devotion," says S Thomas, "is meditation or contemplation on man's side. Devotion, as has been explained, is the act of the will in a ready and willing service of God. Now every act of the will proceeds from the light of intelligence or of reflection, for the good, recognised as such by the intelligence, is the unique object of the will. And that is why meditation must necessarily beget devotion, for it is by means of meditation that man conceives the idea of giving himself to the service of God. To arrive at this result he must meditate upon two things: on the one hand the goodness of God, and his benefits,—and this first consideration excites love which is the mother of devotion;—and on the other hand, man, his poverty, and need of God's help—and this second consideration banishes all presumption, which would prevent him from giving himself wholly to God by making him rely upon himself."[1]

In short it is the understanding alone which, by means of meditation upon God's goodness, can open the human

[1]Sum., 2a 2æ, Q. 82, a. 3.

heart and set it on fire for his service. To give oneself up to the service of God without recourse to meditation would be almost a miracle: *nihil volitum, nisi præcognitum.* Meditation is therefore NECESSARY for the Christian life.

The same is attested by the devout Gerson who says: "Short of a miracle, without the exercise of meditation, nobody can attain to a perfect Christian life.[1]

"Unless thy law had been my meditation," declared the holy King David, "I had then perhaps perished in my abjection."—"Without meditation," he says again, "my heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread."[2]

"Without prayer there can be no progress in acquiring virtue," exclaimed S Bonaventure in his turn,[3] and all the works of the masters of the spiritual life are filled with similar maxims, such as: "He who abandons prayer leaves the way of salvation"; "A day spent without prayer is a day lost"; "A life void of meditation is a crossing without a compass," and the rest.

With meditation, on the contrary, we recover our compass, and find anew the bearings of our pilgrimage towards eternity. "Thy justifications I will never forget," exclaimed the Psalmist, "for by them thou hast given me life."[4]

By meditation we taste the sweetness of God, and when the heart is filled with his love all that seemed difficult and impossible becomes easy and sweet to a generous heart. It rouses us to hold sin in horror, to flee the world and its scandals, to mistrust ourselves, and to trust in him who fortifies us by his grace. By it we form ourselves little by little to the practice of the virtues, to purity of intention in each of our actions, to severity towards ourselves and charity towards others. The practice of daily prayer thus becomes the most pleasant of our devotional exercises. Each morning it is the sun which rises to illuminate and warm the rest of the day. It opens heaven to us and makes us ascend thither in spirit: *Oratio est ascensio mentis in Deum,* says S John of Damascus; it is a familiar converse with God;

[1] Absque meditationis exercitio, nullus, secluso miraculo, ad rectissimam religionis norman attingit.

[2] Nisi quod lex tua meditatio mea est, tunc forte periissem (Ps. cxviii, 92). Aruit cor meum, quia oblitus sum comedere panem meum (Ps. ci, 5).

[3] Frustra profectus virtutum sine oratione speratur (S Bonaventure, *Spec. discipl.*).

[4] In æternum non obliviscar justificationes tuas, quia in ipsis vivificasti me (Ps. cxviii, 93).

familiare cum Deo colloquium, says S Gregory Nazianzen ; it is the soul's union with the sovereign good, *conjunctio hominis et Dei*, S Ephrem adds : it is the angelic life begun upon earth. What could be more excellent and more necessary, inasmuch as it is the very ideal of Christian perfection ?

Nevertheless, this *necessity* for prayer is NOT THE SAME FOR EVERYONE, nor is it necessary in the same degree. And since there are four degrees of ordinary prayer, the fact that we have already set them out separately will enable us now to draw up some practical conclusions.

The FIRST DEGREE, that of reciting slowly and more or less meditating upon certain forms of prayer, is evidently necessary for all the faithful, whether they be lay persons, priests or religious ; no one can count himself exempt, since this is the *minimum* of prayer. Furthermore, it is the only form of prayer possible for untrained limited minds, incapable of following a long course of reasoning, for whom it is no less obligatory to attain their last end and reach salvation. No matter how rudimentary it be, this kind of prayer can be quite adequate to uplift the soul towards God, to honour, adore and thank him, to love him and implore his help ; in a word, to live as a true Christian.

The SECOND AND THIRD DEGREES of prayer are basically one and the same, and are only distinguishable by the fact that in the one, mental considerations predominate over sentiments, and in the other vice versa. One or other of these two degrees seems to us to be necessary for all people who are neither uncultured nor limited in their intelligence, and still more for all those who aspire to Christian perfection, whether by vocation or by attraction, and who are able to pray well upon these lines.

For people in general, without doubt, the necessity is less strict. Daily meditation is not obligatory for them, still less for a prescribed length of time. And yet who would dispense them from it outright ? Let us, then, venture to assert that all Christians, even those who are immersed in worldly affairs, must necessarily make a short meditation, sometimes at any rate, because prayer is necessary to enable them to fulfil the duties of their station in life—let alone the general duties incumbent upon them as Christians—and so necessary is it, that, without prayer, it is not only difficult,

but morally impossible, to discharge these duties. Indeed, without reflection on the great truths of religion and of salvation, which prayer imposes, the passage through this world is accompanied by grave falls, being an affair of chance, without guidance : it is impossible without the help of prayer to attain—and still more impossible to be faithful to—a truly Christian life : and this applies not only to those who seek after perfection, but to the ordinary, well-meaning Christian. This is sound common sense ; and the lamentable example of so many who are Christians only in name, is but an additional proof of this assertion.

The application of this rule of prayer is enforced with greater rigour and strictness on all those who have embraced a more perfect state of life, and especially on those who have the care of souls and who are required to sanctify themselves in order to sanctify others, following the example of our Lord, who first of all willed to sanctify himself and to be sacrificed for us : *pro eis sanctifico meipsum* (Jo. xvii, 19).

It is the universal rule for all religious communities, as well as of all the regular clergy, and of fervent secular priests, to dedicate an hour, or at least half an hour, each morning to meditation. We know well that those of greatest sanctity among them have devoted many hours to meditation, and when prevented by excessive occupation during the day-time, have not hesitated to steal time from the night hours, following in the footsteps of their divine Master : *et erat pernoctans in oratione Dei* (Luke vi, 12).

Without the support of meditation, a life of perfection cannot be imagined : in consideration and affection consist the breath and life of the Christian soul. Perfection is unattainable if these two qualities are not loved, and sought after, and put into practice : it is as if the soul were deprived of the comforts and spiritual consolations necessary to life, the principal source of which is prayer : in short, it is clipping from the soul the wings that are capable of bearing her aloft, high above the things of earth.

On the contrary, according to S Augustine, the whole art of living a saintly life consists in the practice of prayer : *Recte novit vivere, qui recte novit orare* (Hom., 4, Ex. 50). And S Teresa, who may be called the " Mistress of Prayer," compares its effects to those of water, which purifies, re-

freshes, and quenches thirst: extinguishes the flame of concupiscence, washes the soul of its stains, and slakes its ardent thirst for God. (*Way*, ch. xix).

It remains to speak of the FOURTH MANNER of ordinary prayer or acquired contemplation. Is it necessary? We will say nothing here of passive contemplation, which is *infused* into us by impressed species. That would be leaving our subject, and we refer the reader to our Mystical Treatise. For anyone will be able to see for himself—in spite of the exaggerations of certain contemporary mystics—that infused contemplation implies a completely passive element, beyond the reach of human effort, and entirely dependent upon the good pleasure of God; there could be no question of imposing it upon man as necessary, either to his salvation or to his perfection.

This non-necessity of passive or infused contemplation is expressly formulated in the 22nd Article of Issy, signed by Fénelon and Bossuet,[1] as also in the Treatise on Prayer by Benedict XIV. The Carmelite school, faithful disciples of S Thomas, of S Teresa and of S John of the Cross, places it beyond all discussion, since it does not even admit the absolute necessity of acquired contemplation, as we will explain.

It is only a question here of active or acquired contemplation obtained by a repetition of acts and by habit. Is it necessary, if not for arriving at salvation—as everyone agrees—at least for attaining the perfection of the Christian life? And the question is asked both with regard to certain religious orders who make of the contemplative life a special profession, such as the Carmelite order, and with regard to religious, priests, or the faithful laity, who have no special obligation of aiming at it.

First for the latter and speaking in a general manner, we reply that the practice of active or acquired contemplation is in no way necessary for perfection. Doubtless from the point of view of *psychological* perfection, contemplation is more perfect than reasoning. S Thomas often repeats that

[1] "Without these extraordinary prayers (of simple attention, of surrender and of quietude . . .)one can become a very great saint and attain Christian perfection." These 34 Articles of Issy, promulgated in the *Ordonnance* of April 16, 1695, at the head of the *Instructions on the States of Prayer*, received the approbation of the Archbishop of Paris, and the laudatory Brief of Innocent XII to Bossuet (May 6, 1697).

by contemplation man begins to resemble the angels.[1] But it is a question here of *moral* perfection, of merit and of holiness; and in this sense we assert it is not necessary.

The FIRST PROOF, and the best we can give of this, is that it is not accessible to all, although all are called through Baptism to sanctity: *Sancti, electi sancti*, repeats S Paul to all the faithful.

In fact, not every temperament is fitted for contemplation, as S Gregory, Denis the Carthusian, Alvarez de Paz and many others have often pointed out. "There are perfect souls," says Alvarez, "whom God has refused the gift of contemplation because their temperament is not tranquil enough to receive it."[2]

As a matter of fact all have not the making of mystics in them, either on account of their mental equipment, or because of their restless and mobile nature. Now the grace of God, far from destroying nature, only raises it to a higher level, transforming it without compulsion—unless by force of a miracle.

The SECOND PROOF, that of S Thomas, is that Christian perfection, which is comprehended in its entirety in divine charity, can be acquired in a different way from contemplation. In fact, the works of the active, apostolic life are also an exercise in the love of God, another manifestation of the same love, and sharing its perfection, especially when the practice of daily prayer is combined with activity as a matter of course. Moreover, S Thomas defends this form of religious life against those who would set it outside the path of perfection (2a 2æ, Q. 188, a. 2). He maintains, on the contrary, that it is an excellent form of divine charity.

The holy Doctor bases his evidence upon Scripture, especially upon the text of the apostle S James (i, 27), declaring the excellence and the perfection of the works of the active life: *Religio munda et immaculata apud Deum et Patrem hæc est: visitare pupillos et viduas in tribulatione eorum, et immaculatum se custodire ab hoc seculo.* Our Lord had already taught the identity of the love of God with the love of men when he formally asserted: "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it unto me."

[1] Haec est differentia inter hominem et angelum, quod angelus simplici apprehensione veritatem intuetur, homo quodam processu ex multis pervenit ad intuitionem simplicis veritatis (2a 2æ, Q. 180, a. 3, c.).

[2] Alvarez de Paz, *De Inquisitione pacis*, t. III, p. 1692 (éd. de Mayence).

Quandiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis (Matt. xxv, 40).

In a reply to objections, S Thomas adds this profound explanation: activity undertaken for God is rooted in the contemplation of God, and cannot be deprived of the merit of contemplation.[1] In short, the will's activity follows the operation of the mind and shares its perfection.

For the rest, who would dare to maintain that the missionary, accomplishing heroic labours or suffering martyrdom, exercises the virtue of charity less perfectly than the humble Carmelite at contemplative prayer?

The religious of the contemplative orders, such as those of Carmel, by the very text of their constitutions make profession primarily of the contemplative life, and only secondarily of the active life[2]; may we say in their case it is a necessary condition of perfection that they should have attained to contemplation?

It suffices to quote in reply the statements of a religious who is at the present moment the most authentic mouthpiece of the Carmelite tradition. "It should be carefully noted," he says, "that contemplation *is not necessary for salvation;* nor necessary for those who are *obliged* to tend towards perfection (even by reason of their state of life), for the requisite perfection can be acquired by works of the active life" (*Sum.* 2a 2æ, Q. 188, a. 2); still more can one acquire it, if the manner of life is mixed, and if it is combined with daily meditation and that intense fervour which is induced by the practice of the *Exercises* of S Ignatius. The Fathers do not require it in those souls who are *obliged* to tend towards perfection, nor in those whom God calls to it, but who are free to follow their bent. . . This is why the Abbé Saudreau has no right to see "*a deviation*

[1] Dum religiosi operibus vitæ activæ insistunt, intuitu Dei, consequens est quod in eis actio ex contemplatione divinorum derivetur; unde non privantur omnino fructu contemplationis vitæ (2a 2æ, Q. 188, a. 2, ad 1).

[2] The primary object and end of our order lies in contemplation, and the love of everything divine; its secondary aim is action: "potior ejus pars rerum divinorum contemplatio et amor; posterior autem actio" (No. 2 of the Prologue to the Constitutions approved and confirmed by Urban VIII, March 22, 1631). "It is a question," adds Père Marie-Joseph, "of *acquired* contemplation which alone could be proposed as an aim to the whole order of Carmel: *infused* contemplation remaining a privilege, granted to a small number according to God's good pleasure" (*Etudes carmélitaines*, Jan.-April, 1920, p. 17).

from the traditional mystic doctrine" in the refusal of a large proportion of the members of the Society of Jesus to devote themselves to contemplation. They are under no *obligation* to do so. . . . One cannot charge the Society with having made them " deviate."[1]

It could not be better expressed, and the Rev. Father is careful to add that such is " the *unanimous tradition* of the Reformed Carmel "—as was testified by the Carmelite Congress of March 1st, 1923.

Nevertheless, we ADMIT readily, in the case of certain souls, who are truly mystic in sensibility and temperament, that the transition from affective prayer to contemplation is a natural one and, as it were, spontaneous. Once the considerations of their prayer have brought into prominence one of the divine attributes, or some aspect of the Truth, Goodness, or Beauty of God, they cannot refrain from pausing there; from taking delight, as far as is possible, in a simple, loving regard, and thus acquiring by degrees the habit of contemplation in a sweet and fruitful repose. Then, as Tauler expresses it, " the soul remains suspended aloft from the gallows of love, stripped of all earthly things." What could be more sublime, more perfect? Let us beware of setting any obstacle in the way of this holy exercise when God gives the inclination for it. But let us still more beware of postulating it as necessary for perfection, and of thrusting all devout souls towards it, indiscriminately. We should only succeed in multiplying the number of visionaries and spurious mystics.

ARTICLE III

The Methods of Prayer

Since there are four degrees of ordinary prayer, we shall discuss the method in each case.

IN THE FIRST DEGREE of prayer, that of accepted forms of prayer, slowly recited, and more or less meditated upon, there is no method, strictly speaking. The sequence of the text in process of being recited acts as a guiding thread, which is adequate in itself, and takes the place of method.

[1] *Etudes carmélitaines, ibid.*, p. 30. Article by Fr Marie-Joseph du Sacré-Cœur, who refutes at some length the innovations of M. l'Abbé Saudreau, in the name of the Carmelite tradition, after having " for a long time bemoaned them silently " (pp. 3, 4, 30, 36, 38, 39, etc.).

It is only possible to give some practical advice :

1. One should recollect oneself before this holy exercise, place oneself in the presence of God, and prefer that posture of the body likely to aid devotion, such as kneeling, if that be possible.

2. Whilst praying one should not yield to voluntary distractions and should pull oneself up for them severely.

3. At the end, it is important to rouse in oneself devout sentiments of humility, contrition, firm purpose of amendment, and some good practical resolution for that day.

The Second and Third Degrees of prayer become much more complex by their fusion with the different degrees of reasoning and feeling, so that here the help of a method pointing out for us the connection of ideas or sentiments seems indispensable—provided, that is, that such help be a guide and consolation without becoming a chain which paralyses and fetters us. Seeing that the Holy Spirit bloweth where he will, it would be indeed rash for man to prescribe for him a compulsory and invariable way.

This leading remark once made, we shall no longer be astonished at the sight of the many and various methods employed. It is a matter of drafting a programme, or a chart, for all the powers of the human spirit and the human heart, whose possible combinations are infinite. Only the most practical and useful have survived their inventors, especially in the religious orders where family traditions die hard.

Each of these religious families has its own method piously preserved, and all the methods have borne excellent fruit. What has been said of political constitutions may be said of them : " their worth is the worth of the people who employ them." In good, clever hands, even methods which are mediocre in themselves can give excellent results.

It is impossible to expound all the methods, or even to enumerate them. The best known are those of S Ignatius, S Teresa, and S Sulpice.

We shall give a short summary of the third mentioned, without any suggestion of depreciating the first two, or of relegating them merely to second rank. Long established habit and personal experience will be our excuse, if any excuse is necessary to some who read this book.

THE METHOD OF S SULPICE comprises three parts: the *preludes*, the *body of the prayer*, and the *conclusion*. (I) The *preludes* consist (1) in putting oneself in the presence of God by an act of faith; (2) in making acts of contrition and humility whilst reciting the *Confiteor*; and (3) in acts of abandonment to our Lord and his Holy Spirit: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*. . . .

(II) The *body of the prayer* is composed of three points: *adoration, communion, co-operation*, as follows:

1st. Contemplating our divine Model: that is, *adoration*, with the other sentiments which the thought of him inspires: admiration, praise, thanksgiving, love, joy or compassion, according to the nature of the mysteries contemplated.

2nd. Bringing ourselves to attract his grace into our hearts: that is *communion*. To this end, convincing ourselves thoroughly of the necessity of his grace, of the need we have of it, and asking for it confidently. This *conviction*, that grace is necessary for us, is of the highest importance, especially for beginners. Beginners should also make a special point of the considerations and reasonings proposed by the subject of the prayer, without, on the other hand, ever forgetting their *application to themselves* and fervent *petition*.

3rd. Lastly, *co-operation* with the inspirations of grace by means of good resolutions. These should be *particular* and not general, *actual* for that day, *efficacious* and very definite, *humble* and not presumptuous, full of *confidence* in our Lord in whom we can accomplish all things, and often *repeated* lest they be forgotten.

(III) The *conclusion* of the prayer consists in thanking God for the good thoughts that he has been suggesting to us during the prayer, in asking his pardon for the faults we have committed in the course of this holy exercise, in begging him to bless our resolutions, in composing the *spiritual bouquet*, in accordance with the counsel of S Francis de Sales,[1] and in committing the prayer into the hands of our Blessed Lady, by the prayer *Sub tuum præsidium*.

This brief outline of the method of S Sulpice will appear at first a little complicated, but the same may be said of the other methods, and of all exercises in general, even military exercises. The detailed analysis of all their minute movements alarms us, but, once the transition from theory

[1] *Introd. to The Devout Life*, pt. ii, ch. vii.

to practice is accomplished, all is simplified; when one is accustomed, it becomes easy, almost automatic, and, in the end, pleasant, because the method has logically linked together every detail in a perfect unity, pleasing to the mind.

The reader will find a more complete summary of the method of S Sulpice in the *Seminarist's Manual* by M. Letourneau (p. 51-76, Lecoffre) and in the *Method of Prayer of the Seminary of S Sulpice* by the same author.[1]

The Fourth Degree of ordinary prayer, the prayer of *simple regard* or actual contemplation, by reason of the very simplicity of its action, has no need of method strictly speaking, since there are no more discursive acts to be controlled.

There is need only for some general recommendations which are well developed by Bossuet in his 7th Opuscule: *A Short and Easy Method of making the prayer of faith in the simple presence of God*, which all should know.

First recommendation and perhaps the most important. A wise director should never allow a penitent to use this form of prayer unless the three signs of vocation to it are manifest in him; i.e. those enumerated by S John of the Cross:

1st. Incapacity to meditate and to exercise the imagination (that is to say, a real inability and not mere sloth).

2nd. Incapacity to apply the imagination and the senses to particular objects, whether interior or exterior.

3rd. Aptitude or pleasure in maintaining a loving attention towards God, without any particular consideration, in great interior peace or tranquillity, without multiplying acts of the understanding or of the will.

"The soul could not safely quit meditation," adds the same saint, "to enter upon the contemplative life and give herself up to the Spirit of God, if she did not find in herself these three signs united."[2]

[1] The *Carmelite* method has five parts: (a) *Preparation*; (b) *Meditation*, which has for its end the kindling of the will and the moving of the affections; (c) the *Thanksgiving*; (d) the *Oblation*; (e) the *Petition*.—The *Ignatian* method consists of three parts: (a) the *Preludes* (subject of meditation, composition of place, the particular grace to be implored); (b) the *body of the meditation* (exercise of the memory, understanding, and will); (c) the *conclusion* (recapitulation and renewal of resolutions formed). See the additions by Fr Roothaan, at the end of the *Exercises*.

[2] *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, crit. ed., l. II, ch. xi, (or xiii in other editions). These three signs which pertain directly to infused contemplation also apply to acquired contemplation.

Second recommendation. Once entered upon contemplation the soul is not obliged to exclude a return to meditation. There is no such limitation. Firstly, because meditation is the usual entrance-gate or starting-point of complete contemplation; next, because it is the remedy for distractions, and because it leads us gently back when contemplation fails or escapes us; lastly, according to S Teresa, because there is no degree of contemplation so high as to render "frequent returns to the earlier degrees indispensable;" or to rule out the necessity of producing successive acts of faith, hope, charity and of all the virtues.[1]

Third Recommendation.—Illusions in this kind of prayer being frequent, recourse should often be had to a director who will test it by our Lord's criterion: "A tree should be judged by its fruit." We mean here the fruits of sanctity of which heroic virtues are the sign; and of these virtues those which are unmistakably discerned by the humility and obedience which follow from them. If the soul is not obedient, no confidence can be placed in the facts related as taking place. If the soul does not humbly despise herself, together with an ardent desire to be despised like our Lord, illusion is unquestionable.

From this it is clear how much the director must be on the alert to detect pride and vanity which are so natural in the devout sex. Their vivid imagination deceives them, and they easily proceed to fancy themselves far advanced in virtue, and favoured by the most heavenly gifts. It is the great criterion of humility that reveals what they really are.

For that reason the director should beware of seeming to think more of them than of others, especially of consulting them or of having recourse to their supernatural light in present difficulties, still less in reference to the future. By such indiscretions he might become the instrument of their loss.

ARTICLE IV

Preparation and Prolongation of Prayer

Whatever the methods adopted for prayer, it is of outstanding importance to prepare it in advance, and after having made the prayer to preserve its good effects throughout the rest of the day.

[1] Cf. S John of the Cross, *Ascent*, l. I, ch. xiii, p. 163 *et seq.* (crit. ed.).

The IMMEDIATE PREPARATION is indispensable, according to the saying of the sage: "help yourself and heaven will help you." To embark upon prayer without preparation would amount to tempting God, by counting on inspirations from on high which are in no way due to us, and upon which we should never calculate. The Holy Spirit warns us against this in precise terms: *Ante orationem . . . . noli esse quasi homo qui tentat Deum* (Eccli. xviii, 23).

To prepare it the evening before by reading a subject of meditation, is the constant practice of those who habitually make a meditation each morning. The hours of the night and sleep itself, chiefly on account of the calm and quiet, make it possible for this evening reading to penetrate more deeply into the conscious and sub-conscious memory; the ideas stored up are perceived next morning with a freshness, and sometimes a surprising richness of detail, owing to their elaborating over night. Furthermore, as all psychologists are aware, what one has learnt thus is more easily retained and makes a deeper impression upon the soul. The evening before, then, is the best time to prepare the subject of one's meditation.

The REMOTE PREPARATION, indicated in all the manuals of devotion, consists: 1st, in an entire purity of heart; 2nd, in a perfect mortification of the passions; 3rd, in a great fidelity in guarding all the senses, both exterior and interior, in order to be forearmed against distractions and mental wandering which might conjure up worldly images.

These three dispositions are without doubt excellent, and the more perfect they are, the better will the prayer be also. But, since they are also the fruit which the regular practice of prayer should produce little by little, it is clear that it will not do to wait to acquire them before beginning prayer: that would be to rotate in a vicious circle. The prayer can, and should, be entered upon without these dispositions, and they will grow and increase together with the fruits of prayer practised faithfully.

The PROLONGATION of prayer throughout the rest of the day—in its essentials—is no less useful than its preparation.

Since it is essentially based upon an *elevation of mind and heart towards God*, this elevation can and should continue, in an implicit and more or less indistinct manner, like the per-

fume of a precious vase, after it has been opened and closed again.

This perfume is the constant thought of God, also called the practice of the presence of God, who continues to envelop us on every side by his immensity, and sustains us in being and life. Seeing that he thinks of us at every moment, it is only right that we also should think of him frequently, or at least as much as our human powers enable us to do.

And thus it is that our morning prayer can continue to embalm and fortify us by its sweetness throughout the rest of the day.[1] And mark well that this exercise of the thought and the presence of God can be pursued in the midst of all one's occupations and in the most absorbing affairs.

In order to make us understand this, the celebrated Fr. Surin draws a very original and striking comparison which cannot fail to impress the reader.

In a letter addressed about 1662 to the Viscountess de Roussille, a lady of a somewhat frivolous disposition, and to all her family, he gives advice "for a soul aspiring to Christian perfection and desirous of experiencing the advantage to be found in the perfect service of God." And this advice is to see God everywhere, in all created objects, since he is omnipresent, and intimately present in each. "Our happiness would be assured if these objects, instead of diverting us from God, carried us to him. . . . If in all these objects we were always looking upon God, realising even though indistinctly, his universal presence, everything confronting our eyes or our mind would lift us up to God and we should suffer no distractions. There are souls to whom the idea of God's presence becomes at once so universal and so familiar that hardly anything diverts them from that thought. They find God everywhere, and the universal being is present for them in every individual being. Thus nothing separates them from God. . . . Here there is almost a parallel to playing the lute: the thick string which one touches with the thumb gives a general note which supplements the different notes of the lesser strings, making them sound true and sweet, provided that they are in harmony with the first note. It is the same with the idea of God when it is general. . . . It is enough to tune up all the

[1] Bossuet (t. VII, Vivès, Lachat), *An Easy Method for passing the day in prayer* (for the Visitation Nuns of Meaux).

secondary notes to that of this string, which intones God by a note which is the more pure the more it is elevated and free. . . . Everything can harmonise with God, save sin."

Now for the end of this interesting letter which we should be sorry to omit. " You see, madam, to what I invite you. If you wish, you will find in this prayer the source of all good things and a foretaste of Paradise. Mme. de Pontchat will find in it joy, peace and tranquillity of heart. Besides Mlle. de Roussille, who is going to become a Carmelite, both M. de Pontchat and M. de Renty can pray, even when equipped with weapons for the chase, or in the course of paying visits and performing the other duties of their position, etc. . . ."[1]

I am well aware that Fr Surin, by this general prayer based on the idea of the presence of God, which he calls the "confused taste of God," despises and would even suppress meditation properly so called upon definite subjects—which amounts to assuming that meditation upon revealed dogmas is useless. This is one of those useless and harmful exaggerations of his which are responsible for his *Spiritual Catechism* being placed on the Index. If only, instead of suppressing ordinary meditation, he had been pleased to *complete* it and *prolong* it through the rest of the day by the general idea of the presence of God, he would have been a marvellous exponent of the practice of the presence of God, which is not incompatible with the business or duty of one's station in life.

This general idea of God, predominant in all our daily actions, and directing them to God, is nothing else but the fruit of ordinary prayer, the perfume which we ought to distil from it to render the whole day and every day fragrant throughout our entire lives. Everything in this base world can be made to harmonise with this key-note—sin apart. And, what is more, every creature instead of turning us away from him, *should* be a rung to raise us nearer to God, as is well said by S John Climacus, "*every creature is a ladder up to God.*"

To this end S Francis de Sales advises us to take one or two of the thoughts which have struck us most in the course of the meditation, in order to revert to them fre-

[1] *Spiritual Letters*, vol. I, p. 287-297, quoted by Brémond, *Histoire litt. du sentiment religieux*, vol. V, p. 294-299.

quently in the course of the day, in the form of *ejaculatory prayers*; just as we see people in the world, on leaving a garden sweet with flowers, gather one or two of them so as to go on breathing longer the sweet scent of the garden. This is the "*Spiritual Bouquet.*"

Upon this same subject, Chapters xii and xiii of the 2nd Part of *The Devout Life* may be read with profit.

ARTICLE V

Dryness and Aridity in Prayer

One of the greatest obstacles to the practice of prayer, and one which often prevents it from bearing all its fruits, is the DRYNESS and aridity which one may experience, and which contrasts in a singular manner with the first sweetness which the soul enjoys in its delights.

"From time to time, as I have already said"—S Teresa confesses—"God wishes the soul to be in darkness and the light to be wholly eclipsed . . . I have just passed eight days without any feeling of the goodness of God, without the slightest remembrance of his gifts. My soul was reduced to a kind of stupidity. . . . It was useless for her to carry wood and do the little she could; it was impossible to enkindle the flame of divine love. It is a great act of divine mercy that smoke appears to show that the fire is not completely out. . . ."[1]

God, who feeds beginners with the sweet milk of consolations, withdraws it suddenly, either in punishment for their infidelity and their spiritual laziness, or to give them a nourishment more solid and substantial, which makes them enjoy the higher and purer delights of pure love without reward.

This ORDEAL, sometimes so painful, but so useful, makes us learn to love the God of consolations more than the consolations of God. Now this lesson, however hard it may be for our self-love, is indispensable for purifying our union with God.

The soul, then, far from being discouraged, ought sincerely to thank and bless the hand which tests it, and co-operate with the divine purifying action by a complete

[1] *Life*, vol. II, ch. xxvii, p. 96, translation of the Carmelites of Paris.

resignation. These acts of sweet resignation are an excellent form of discursive prayer.

Nevertheless, one must never harden oneself against the obstacle, nor tire one's head uselessly, by forcing oneself to think, when one cannot think any more. The counsel which S Teresa gives—and which is a further proof of her admirable practical common sense—is this : " To my mind, the best thing, then, for this soul, is to recognise frankly its utter incapacity, and to occupy itself, as I have said before, with other meritorious works."[1] It is one of the cases when the saint would shorten and even temporarily suppress the exercise of meditation, until the aptitude for it comes back.

During this time, adds S Teresa, far from fretting and being distressed, " one must not even pay attention to this dryness, but on the contrary, have a firm resolution, even if it continues one's whole life, never to abandon Christ and his Cross."[2]

Abandonment to God and his good pleasure is here the best rule, and with the help of a wise director, we shall learn to put it in practice.[3]

[1] *Life, ibid.*

[2] *Way of Perfection,* ch. xxi.

[3] *Remark.*—This aridity and total inability to reason about things takes sometimes the form of a prayer of simple regard, called the *Prayer of S Chantal,* which at the beginning may be active and acquired, and then become transformed, if God desires it, into infused and passive prayer.

CHAPTER II

Examination of Conscience

ITS PLACE. The first movement of the soul in this work of perfection was an elevation of the mind and heart towards God in order to know and love him more. The second was a *reverting of the soul to herself* in order to know herself and to reform herself. And this second work is no less essential in the work of our perfection than the first, which, without it, would remain sterile.

The thinkers of ancient times, nevertheless, had put this reverting of the soul to herself in the first rank, and we know the famous phrase which Thales had carved on the door of his temple—*know thyself*, γνῶθι σεαυτον.[1]

But how can one know oneself without the divine light, without having studied and contemplated the divine Model, whose infinite perfections, already made visible in the marvels of creation, have found in the person of our Lord their most beautiful human expression, the most accessible to our imitation?

These thinkers of pagan antiquity, living before the coming of our divine Saviour, are partly excusable; but Christians must reverse the pagan order, and begin by studying the divine ideal before undertaking to regulate their life by his. The knowledge of God must therefore logically precede the knowledge of oneself. Hence the title of Bossuet's immortal work: *Of the knowledge of God and of oneself.*

Before undertaking to know ourselves, we must put ourselves in the presence of our divine Model, in the school of the adorable Master who first formulated this precept unknown to men, "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart." Our study of the human heart beating within us is no longer, as it was for the pagan philosophers, an arrogant study, excusing and even deifying the passions of man,—but a study, very humble, full of confusion in declaring our miseries, and ending with a flight towards God, who alone

[1] Diog. Laert, *In Thal.*

can heal, reform, and save us: *De profundis clamavi ad te Domine* (Ps. cxxix, 1).

Division of the Subject. We are going to demonstrate the *necessity* for the examination of conscience; its *difficulties*; the *objects* to be examined; and the *method* of this scrutiny which is to give us knowledge and direction in the reform of ourselves.

ARTICLE I

Necessity of the Examination of Conscience

The Prophet Jeremias wrote that the whole earth is full of desolation because there is no one who reflects on the passions of his heart: *Desolatione desolata est omnis terra quia nemo est qui recogitet corde* (Jer. xii, 11). It is the inattention of most men to the inward movements of the passions, for the purpose of understanding, directing and controlling them, which causes the greater part of the disorder upon the earth. Irreflection causes even more evils than malice.

Following the recognition of God, the first movement of a soul who wishes to be converted and to give itself to him is to reflect and to enter into itself. This was the first movement of repentance in the Prodigal Son, says the Evangelist. And this is why S Teresa, describing the ascent of the soul towards the ideal of Christian perfection, has made the "*knowledge of self*" the first stage, a first "Mansion" in the *Castle of the Soul*, granted that God is already known.

How can one correct one's faults and become better if one does not begin by knowing oneself? This is an obvious truth, which all the Christian moralists, and even the pagan ones, proclaim and on which it seems useless to insist.

Now it is the frequent, and even daily, examination of conscience, which alone can give us this knowledge.

There are vices in us so disguised, and so hidden in the deep folds of our hearts, licentiousness so subtle and so easily forgiven by self-love, that it is only by serious and sincere reflection that we recognise them.

A soul which does not examine itself, or does so superficially, is like uncultivated land which becomes

rapidly covered with thorns and briers. We can also compare it to a business, where the man who conducts it neglects to make up his accounts daily, and allows his affairs to become involved: he runs the risk of being ruined, without even suspecting it.

It is the same with the soul which does not examine itself, which does not think any more of its progress in spiritual affairs: its loss is certain, and S Gregory the Great does not hesitate to warn us that the habitual omission of examination of conscience is characteristic of the reprobate. He adds, on the contrary, that to do it well each day is the certain mark of the elect.[1]

The *first effect* of this examination is the knowledge of our misery and nothingness, and therefore it is the beginning of humility, the mother of all the virtues, and the foundation of Christian perfection. Only those who do not know themselves, or know themselves only superficially, can become proud. The truth is that we are inclined, by the bent of our nature, to evil, and are radically incapable, by ourselves and without the grace of God, of avoiding all sin.

The *second effect* of this entering into oneself is to stop or anticipate the passions from the moment of their awakening. Only vigilance can prevent a conflagration, and when it breaks out extinguish it; otherwise havoc increases and the ruin becomes irreparable.

The *third effect* of this examination is to throw us into the arms of God, at the sight of our supreme need and of the corruption of our origin. The greater the distrust and even the horror which a soul feels for herself, and the greater the conviction of need, powerlessness, and malice, the more will she seek to hide herself and to lose herself in God, in whom she can do all things.

In entering into herself by examination of conscience, the soul will find the sovereign remedy against blindness and the evil impulses which result from it, and will discover everything necessary for perfection.

[1] Electorum est actus suos ab ipso cogitationis fonte discutere; reproborum autem prava quæ faciunt cæca mente pertransire (S Gregory, *Mor.*, II, vi).

ARTICLE II

Difficulties in the Examination of Conscience

This exercise of the spiritual life, necessary as it is, offers very great difficulties, some *general* and common to all men, others *special*, either to beginners or to the more perfect. We will indicate them rapidly.

I. General Difficulties.—1. *Reflection on oneself* is a painful effort of the mind, an effort which costs us much—such is human nature. As it is easy for the mind to expand outwardly and to act *ad extra* in order to know and appreciate our surroundings, so it is painful to act in an opposite way, and to withdraw from the outside to the inside. And that is why there are so few men on earth capable of reflecting habitually on themselves. It is spontaneous activity which dominates everything: the reflective life is the lot of a very small number.

2. To this first difficulty is added that which comes from the strangely subtle complexity of our interior actions, a complexity we have to recognise and disentangle. The most diverse feelings surge up sometimes at the same moment, or follow each other with great rapidity in our souls; they intersect each other, and act on us in diverse ways, and even in ways so opposite that they often defy the analysis of psychologists. What anomalies, what incessant contradictions; they make of the human heart a real enigma, an indecipherable mystery! Not only are there *two* men in us, as Racine says, following S Paul, but we might say that there are sometimes several, according to the impressions of the moment, and this is one of the saddest things to see . . . that we are so inconstant with ourselves and that we are unable to find the basis of our instability.[1]

Not only is it sometimes difficult to state what is passing in us, but even more so to go back on the hidden causes of our actual feelings. It is as difficult—Wisdom tells us—as tracing the course of a stream across the mountains, to the first trickle of water which is its source: or as tracing in the air the course which the wings of a bird have drawn in its flight.

[1] Cf. S Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, l. VI.

3. A third difficulty comes from secret *illusions* about ourselves, and from that tendency of our self-love always to excuse ourselves, that is, to deceive ourselves about what we are and what we do. This is not the least of our difficulties. Clear-sighted about the slightest fault in others, we are blind about our own, even the worst. It is necessary, very often, for a charitable friend to take the trouble to warn us, and even he must do it with tact and a thousand precautions—if he would keep our friendship, and not pass in our eyes for a jealous and malicious person.

It does not matter whether these illusions are voluntary or involuntary—the result is the same: we do not know ourselves, either because we do not *want* to, or because we do not know *how* to know ourselves.

II. Special Difficulties.—1. The more *advanced* in the spiritual life, who by repetition ought to have acquired great ease in the holy exercise of examination of conscience, are on the contrary—too often—those who abandon it the most easily. In this is a fact of daily experience. They are willingly faithful to prayer in which they find abundant consolation. The Examination of Conscience is for them on the contrary, dry, sterile, wearisome; and in order to be faithful to it in spite of the want of attraction, they ought to put before their eyes without ceasing its importance and necessity, even for the most perfect. It is daily bread, which, in spite of its being dry, must nevertheless be eaten, to support our life.

2. *Beginners* in the way of perfection find other difficulties in this spiritual exercise, arising from the number of things on which they ought to examine themselves, and also the way they ought to proceed in this research. Therefore we must study the *objects* and *method* of the examination of conscience.

ARTICLE III

The Objects of the Examination of Conscience

What the objects of enquiry in an examination of conscience are depends on whether it is a question of a *general* examination as a prelude to the sacrament of Penance, or of a *particular* examen under spiritual direction and for making progress in the ways of perfection.

A *general* examination as prelude to a good confession ought to include all deliberate sins, mortal or venial, which we can call to mind as having committed since our last confession; the *particular* examination includes, further, the least faults and the slightest imperfections, we seek the cause of them, that is to say, the failings which are the habitual source of these faults, above all, the principal failing, the dominant passion, by which we are the most endangered; finally, we also seek the chief attractions which ought to rule our lives if we direct them well.

It is this particular examination, aiming at perfection, which is the subject of ascetic theology: the first belongs to moral theology, which treats of the Sacrament of Penance, and the conditions required in order to receive it with fruit.

To proceed with order in this search, we will put three problems or three questions: 1st, What is our chief fault to be corrected? 2nd, What is its origin; does it come from nature, contracted habits, or heredity? 3rd, What are our dominant attractions to be well directed?

I. What is our DOMINANT FAULT? Happy the man who has only one single fault! We all have several of them; they may even be numerous. Now it is a good plan not to attack them all at the same time, but one after the other, and to choose first the chief one among them, the one which usually commands the rest, in order to begin the reformation and the struggle with the most dangerous one, the dominant fault.

However, sometimes this dominant passion is not evil in itself, but only a good quality carried to excess, which it will be sufficient to moderate or direct better.

Thus an ardent and expansive nature is quickly inflamed and can easily allow itself to be led into anger, whilst in moderation, and well disciplined, it becomes a strong agent for zealous works, suitable for great undertakings inspired for the glory of God.

A sensitive and loving heart will be easily led to vain or dangerous friendships, and will waste its treasures of sensibility in futile amusements and worldly vanities. On the contrary, once turned towards God and towards the ideal of supernatural beauty, this heart will become capable of the most beautiful devotions and of the highest perfection.

A sweet and gentle character will be incapable of bold and generous initiative ; it will never make anything of its life ; but well directed, it may become, in the hands of a good superior, a faithful guardian or a docile and very valuable agent in a multitude of works.

Such characters are far from being bad : they are good, only incomplete.

All passions, even the dominant one of ambition, can be well directed and sanctified, as the well-known example of S Francis Xavier proves.

Many passions, on the contrary, should be mercilessly mortified and extirpated ; they may lead to selfishness, sensuality, greediness, impurity, stubbornness, jealousy, and the like.

But it is not sufficient for the person who examines himself to have determined the dominant fault. It is a plain fact that he must try to analyse and understand it in its roots and causes, both moral and physiological ; and this useful study will be full of attraction.

II. The Genesis of the Dominant Fault. It may be the natural result of our physiological *temperament*, or of *habits* that we have contracted, sometimes even *hereditary* taint. These causes may be examined.

(A) The *temperament* of each person is the principal cause of his faults, as of his good qualities. Its moral importance, denied in spite of the evidence of daily facts by the Cartesians, has been exaggerated by the materialists, but it remains for all good philosophy an incontestable fact, whatever may be the physiological causes.

Now the kinds of temperament are numerous. Here is the classic division of them, after the ancient physiologists, Hippocrates and Galen. They distinguished four temperaments : *sanguine*, *bilious*, *phlegmatic*, and *melancholic*, produced by the supposed predominance of one of the four cardinal humours, the blood, the bile, the phlegm, and the atrabile. But as these two last elements are no longer admitted by modern science, therefore, the phlegmatic and melancholic temperaments have disappeared with them, or have only been preserved under other titles and for other reasons. Besides, all moderns add the *nervous* temperament to the list, and some, the *muscular* or athletic temperament—in all, *six* temperaments.

In this conflict of scientific opinions, which time-honoured discussions have not succeeded in harmonising, we will keep to purely practical issues, avoiding all speculation on causes, more or less unknown, and we will restrict ourselves to a summary and entirely exterior description of these six temperaments, arranging them in the following order. Firstly, the two temperaments *sanguine* and *nervous*—whose existence to-day is beyond doubt. Then two others: the *bilious* and the *phlegmatic*, more generally recognised. Finally, the *melancholic* and the *muscular*; their distinct existence is much more contestable.

1. The *sanguine* is a temperament characterised by the predominance of blood and abundance of life. It is easily recognised by the highly-coloured face and red complexion, the fresh skin, chestnut and supple hair, pleasing and gracious bodily form, and the animated and gay countenance. The imagination is sparkling, the feelings tender, and the mind easy and prompt, but it usually loses in depth what it gains superficially. If sometimes there is a lack of intelligence, the feelings dominate reason and easily lead it. The character is pliable and easy, with lively but fleeting passions, and no lasting hatreds; it is generous and loving, easy but inconstant. As typical of this temperament, we may take Henry IV, Mirabeau, S Francis de Sales, as examples.

From the spiritual point of view, the resources for good in this temperament are considerable—love, generosity. brilliance of movement, vivacious impressions. For evil it will also have allurements, above all towards voluptuousness, and love of pleasure in all its forms; it has a horror of trouble and effort, leading to spiritual sloth and inconstancy.

2. The *nervous* temperament is due to sensitiveness and habitual over-excitement of the nervous system. It is easily recognised by the pale and thin face, the dry and discoloured skin, prominent veins, jerky walk, a perpetually mobile complexion, full of expression, which seems to reflect all the emotions of the soul, and react to the exterior movements of the air or temperature. The appetite of a nervous person is capricious, his digestion bad, and his sleep restless. In a time of emotion, he believes himself capable of anything; after it has passed, comes lassitude, and he feels fit for nothing. The volubility of his speech, the

frequency of his gestures and orders, make a perpetual contrast with the periods of depression and prostration which follow. In a word, his existence is passed in perpetual contradictory spells of love and hate, heat and cold, enthusiasm and depression, lively joy and depression still more constant and deep. With a touch of genius, the nervous temperament has produced types such as Tiberius, Louis XI, Pascal, J. J. Rousseau, Zimmermann, Robespierre.

Such natures are fundamentally unhappy, but they are very accessible to piety and the religious life, because of their exquisite sensitiveness. The very excess of this sensitiveness exposes them to a double peril: inconstancy in doing good, and the insatiable need for extraordinary emotions. However, if well directed and placed in good surroundings and regular life, these faults may at length be overcome and transformed.

3. The *bilious* temperament, which is attributed to the predominance of the action of the liver and bile, is revealed to the observer by an appearance, more or less sombre, an abundance of hair, dark in colour, eyes also dark, features accentuated, generally an intelligent and firm air, vigorous muscles, great activity, very much warmth in the whole of the organism, brusque movements, and imperious speech.

Men of this stamp have generally plenty of ability, a great rapidity of glance and penetration, strong, bold, and lasting convictions, perseverance in all trials. Unfortunately they also have the failing of these qualities—a great stubbornness. They are ungovernable and capable of going to any excess. They also have great ambitions, and an extreme obstinacy in satisfying them.

As examples of this type, we may cite Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Brutus, Mahomet, Sixtus the Fifth, Cromwell, Peter the Great, and Napoleon. The bilious type is rarer with women than with men. It is noticed oftener in the South than in other climates.

One can see the power of this temperament both for good and for evil. For good, it would have boldness in great works, firmness which carries them out even to the end, calm, temperance, and at least relative chastity. For evil, there is the risk of having all the failings of pride, anger and obstinacy.

4. The *phlegmatic* or *lymphatic* temperament is characterised by the superabundance of lymphatic humours, producing

weakness and lifelessness in the bodily apparatus. Exteriorly, it is recognised by the abundance and softness of the flesh, often diaphanous and ill-shaped. The face is full, but without colour or lively expression ; the hair is straight, fair or flaxen in colour, the eyes blue, the shape rounded. Slowness of movement and decision, and general apathy, are striking and characteristic signs.

From an intellectual point of view, phlegmatics do not shine, either by imagination and aptitude for the fine arts, or by any taste for speculative work or abstract sciences. Their reason is hardly above ordinary common-sense, and the practical needs of everyday life.

From a moral point of view, they have neither great vices nor great virtues. Not ambitious, content with little, they are tranquil, patient, and of a very equal temperament. But if one attempts to urge them a little in the ways of perfection, one soon experiences their indecision, their laziness, and their indifference.

This character is fairly common amongst those who are not very high-minded.

5. The *melancholic* or *splenetic* temperament, as the ancients called it (atrabilis, μέλας χόλος) is much less a distinct temperament than a pathological manifestation of the *bilious* temperament. Therefore, it has the same exterior signs, though still more accentuated : pale face, black or dark brown eyes, eyes bright or else full of tears, aspect austere, meditative, sad, or uneasy. The intelligence is dominated by a mournful or dreary imagination, and revels in pessimism, whereas the sanguine is nearly always an optimist.

From a moral point of view the melancholic person is given to defiance, jealousy and vengeance. He complains of everyone and of himself, becomes misanthropic, flees the world, plunges into solitude, and in order to be quit of himself sometimes contemplates suicide.

Thus, with melancholic persons there are many encouragements to meditation, and the austerities of the cloistered or solitary life. But they also offer all the inconveniences of the failings already notified, above all, sadness, distrust, scrupulousness, jealousy, and despair.

6. Lastly, the *muscular* or *athletic* temperament appears to be but an exaggerated development of the sanguine. The frame is strong, muscles powerful and well developed,

the ample neck is thicker at the back, the chest full, the shoulders wide and square. Otherwise, the head is rather small, and the forehead narrow, which seems to indicate in the athletic person an inferiority of brain power, and a predominance of physical force and animal life. At times it might even be said that the moral sense is blunted, and the mind dormant. However, the character is ordinarily good, calm, and even docile, except for outbursts of anger when the unchained brute breaks all bounds.

Such a temperament perhaps offers the least inclination to virtue, because good sense and reason do not seem to enjoy sufficient control. The apparent docility and obedience would only be intermittent, and usually it would be a case of yielding to the influence of desired enjoyments and temptations either of intemperance or of impurity.

Such are the principal types of the temperaments in the native state, that is to say, as they result from the primitive constitution of each, and before such modifications as age, contracted habits, climate, rule of life, illness and a thousand other chance circumstances influence them—such as they appear from birth, with their good qualities and their faults. No one is entirely good, no one is entirely bad. Each one would find his natural complement in the opposite temperament, and together they would make a synthetic harmony.

Happy the mortal who is thus perfectly balanced! Perhaps he does not exist?

Leaving on one side the two last types, and keeping to the first four truly fundamental ones, we can note the characteristic of each, as well as the biblical symbol which has been attributed to it by the ancients:

1. The sanguine temperament has *eager activity* for its good quality, and its symbol is the *Lion*.

2. The nervous temperament has *imaginative buoyancy* for quality, and its symbol is the *Eagle*.

3. The bilious temperament is distinguished by *will-power*, and its symbol is the *Human Head*.

4. Finally, the lymphatic has for its quality *calm* and *patient* labour, and its symbol is the *Ox*.

This picture, it is true, is very incomplete, since it shows only the qualities. It leaves it to the reader to reverse the medal, and to read there attentively all the faults of these same qualities which we have enumerated.

At least the four distinctive marks are there which every observer should have always before his eyes if he wishes to find immediately what is the particular temperament, or, as is said to-day, the idiosyncrasy, of each individual whom he examines. Such an examination is indispensable in order to know ourselves and also to know those who are confided to our direction. If we did not learn to dominate them, these blind tendencies of our temperament might bring us to the bottomless pit, and surely paralyse all our efforts towards the ideal of Christian perfection.

(B) *Habits.*—The dominant fault, whose origin we are studying here, has not only the natural tendencies of our temperament as cause, but also the habits which we have contracted more or less freely, for more or less length of time. If present since our childhood, these habits must be deeply rooted, and have become a " second nature."

If these habits have been acquired in the direction of our natural inclinations, the latter thus double their strength, and finish by imposing themselves on us with a tyranny if not invincible, at least very difficult, and very hard to resist. On the other hand, good habits can very happily correct and modify those natural inclinations which might be vicious, above all when they have been contracted at an early age. In the springtime of life, nature is still like soft wax, which easily receives all the impressions it is given, whether for evil or for good.

By this is seen not only the utility, but the necessity of a good education, from the tenderest age, and, therefore, the extravagance of Rousseau's method, who under the pretext of respecting the liberty of the child, wished him to await the age of twenty-one years before proposing submission to a religious and moral discipline. As long as a child is a minor, the parents have the charge and responsibility not only of his physical life, but also of his moral and religious life, which is far more precious. Therefore, they have the rigorous duty not only of teaching him to live, but to live well, and consequently to prevent or correct his bad habits and to develop the good ones. That is the true good, and also the happiness of both the children and the parents themselves.

(C) *Heredity.*—However, our treatment would be incomplete, if to these two original causes of our moral tendencies,

nature and habits, we did not add a third, which is both natural and acquired, through many successive generations —namely, *heredity*.

It is a very mysterious but incontestable fact, that parents influence the characters of their children, not only by the class of education they give them, but first of all by the act of generation itself. It is seldom that the parents are morally responsible for it; however, this responsibility happens in certain cases, for example, when an infant is conceived while the father or the mother is in a state of drunkenness, madness, or violent passion, and the like. However it may be, voluntary or not, the hereditary legacy is no less certain.

The resemblance, more or less striking, of children to their father or to their mother, or to some one of their ancestors, is a daily undeniable fact. Now these resemblances are not only physical, in the features of the face, the figure, the walk, the temperament, the morbid inclinations, etc., but also moral, in the intimate inclinations of the soul, the aptitudes of the mind, the taste for letters, sciences, or arts, and also for certain failings, certain oddities of character, certain passions, such as the passion for gambling, theft or impurity. And we remember reading truly frightful examples in teratological works. How is it possible not to believe in it, or even be astonished at it? Do we doubt that intellectual idiocy and madness can be handed down by heredity? Surely not. Then why not also moral manias and monstrosities? In exceptional or teratological cases, the liberty of man is no less fragile than his reason; they follow the same fate, and one is not more inviolable than the other. God will have pity on the poor children whose monstrosity is in no way imputable to them, but the crime of their parents.

Undoubtedly these facts are extremely rare; all the more reason why directors of souls should not be left ignorant of them.

Ordinarily, in these cases of hereditary monomania, human liberty is by no means totally abolished, but only weakened, and its responsibility diminished. Then it is the great art of the instructor of infancy, and of the confessor, to correct nature little by little, very patiently, to enable it to recover more or less its normal balance.

Conclusion.—Let us carefully question our consciences

or the consciences which are confided to us. And after a detailed study of these three possible sources of the dominant fault, temperament, habit, and heredity, we will end by knowing that fault, and engaging in the struggle, with the grace of God and the enlightenment of our director. But it would be impossible to struggle against an unknown enemy.

III. What are our Dominant Attractions to Good?—Must we limit ourselves to knowing the evil tendencies which are in us, and what our dominant fault is? Certainly not; that is the first and most urgent work of self-examination, but it is the negative part only; the work of our perfection consists not only in destroying but also in building up; not only in preventing evil, but in doing good and in turning our whole life towards the good.

After the examination of our evil tendencies, it remains then to study the good and generous tendencies, which vary according to the different temperament of each person. After seeking the dominant fault, it will be equally necessary to find out what is the *dominant attraction*, in order to purify it, to supernaturalise it, to develop it, and make it bear all the fruits of zeal and holiness which it is capable of producing in and around us.

The dominant attraction to good may come from *nature* or from *grace*. One is human, the other divine. It is necessary to distinguish clearly each of these impulses. Thus the "voices" of Joan of Arc, which urged her to fly to the help of invaded France, were surely not human attractions, for they suited neither her sex nor her occupation as shepherdess nor the habits of her life. They were divine attractions.

On the contrary, the natural attraction may come, just as the dominant fault, from natural temperament, acquired habits, and even heredity. But it is above all from the temperament that it proceeds, and it is that which gives to each one his own aptitude for good or evil.

It will be sufficient to recall here the general principles which we have already set down on the nature and classification of temperaments, which reveal to us at the same time their qualities as well as their dominant faults.

Thus, the *sanguine* temperament is given to love, generosity and devotion to noble causes, and a beautiful ideal.

The *nervous* temperament, by its exquisite sensitiveness, is given to piety and devotion ; fresh emotions do not weary it, and it finds in this need which spurs it on, a stimulant to zealous works.

The *bilious* temperament finds also a need of activity, of zeal, but has greater firmness and constancy, and does not allow obstacles to disconcert, nor the rigours of temperance and chastity to dismay it.

The *phlegmatic* temperament loves peace, calmness, tranquillity, patience, and equality of temper, so appreciated in religious communities.

The *melancholy* temperament has an attraction towards solitude, prolonged meditations and austerities.

Finally, the *muscular* temperament, born for action and struggles, will be able to endure fatigues, distant voyages on missions, and painful physical exercises.

Once the temperament of the person to be guided is known, it would then be necessary to aim at developing by preference those virtues which agree best with his nature. Those virtues which harmonise at the same time both with nature and with grace, would therefore be practised with more facility and pleasure, be more constant in their duration, and develop to a more eminent degree.

Thus, for example, one of bilious nature should above all apply it to active virtues, capable of giving sufficient outlet to its ardour and energy.

The melancholic man should use his natural bent in turning gently towards the interior and contemplative life, by favouring solitude which is its best element.

The sanguine and affective will yield themselves to the operations of divine love, to works of benevolence and charity, which accord best with their kindness of heart.

In this way there is more success and less trouble in the acquisition of virtues to a higher degree, because nature, finding itself applied to those virtues which best suit it, easily assists the work of grace. It is in this way that a wise director prepares the examination of a religious or lay vocation, and the adjustment of a whole life.

After the knowledge of natural attractions comes the knowledge of supernatural or divine attractions.

The DIVINE ATTRACTION is recognised by certain interior

attractions, which are felt in the hours of meditation and prayer, above all in times of sensible fervour.

Sometimes it may be like an internal voice, which echoes in the silence of our hearts, without words and without noise. It is a secret appeal of the Divine Master who is calling us to follow him: *Ecce sto ad ostium et pulso . . . Dominus adest qui vocat te. . . .*

More frequently it is some thought which rises unexpectedly in our minds, without any natural preparation. It strikes us in a strangely vivid way, and is accompanied by a more or less irresistible impulse to realise it.

Sometimes it is less a dazzling light than a delicious sweetness, a pressing need, an indefinable attraction to which one must yield, or suffer remorse.

Under whatever form the celestial attraction makes itself felt, it is sufficient to listen to it, to observe it, to examine whether it is fugitive and illusive, or repeated, frequent and permanent, as are all truly supernatural and divine inspirations. If any doubt remains, it will be the part of the director to dissipate it, with the help of the principles for the discernment of spirits.

But once the voice from Heaven is perfectly recognised, and authenticated by the director, it is clear that there must be no hesitation, but obedience; and that the hardening of the heart would be a sin against the Holy Spirit, according to the words of the psalmist: *Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra . . .* (Psal. lxxxiv, 8).

"Resolve, Philothea," writes the lovable S Francis de Sales, "to accept heartily all the inspirations it will please God to send you, and when they arrive, receive them as ambassadors of the celestial King . . . Listen peacefully to their propositions, consider the love with which you are inspired, and caress the holy inspiration. Consent to the holy inspiration, but with a full consent, loving, and constant; for in this way God, on whom you cannot lay an obligation, will hold himself the more strongly bound by your affection."[1]

[1] *S François de Sales*, Introd., pt. II, ch. xviii.

ARTICLE IV

Methods of examination of Conscience

The HEATHEN MORALISTS, enlightened only by their natural good sense, understood well that, without the practice of this spiritual exercise, no reform of morals was possible, nor advancement in any virtue; therefore we find in Seneca, Plutarch, and above all in Epictetus, good methods of self-examination.

Even among the laity of our days, we knew an excellent professor of the Sorbonne who publicly taught it to his literary students, and practised it faithfully himself.[1]

But it was reserved to the great Doctors of the Church, throughout the Christian ages, to transfigure this exercise of purely natural moral beauty into an instrument of supernatural sanctification and salvation, and also to popularise it. Instead of being the privilege of the select few, it has been put, by them, within the reach of all, like eternal salvation itself.

S Basil, S Augustine, S John Chrysostom, S Antony, S Bernard, all masters of the spiritual life, have traced the rules for self-examination. But it is S Ignatius above all who has analysed and codified the practice in a very perfect and definite way, in his immortal *Spiritual Exercises*. Therefore, his method has spread among all the religious orders, in all monasteries both for men and women, in all the seminaries and among the clergy, the pious faithful, in a word, throughout the whole Church, where it does not cease to bear the fruit of truly marvellous sanctification.

It is this method which we are going to try to give in detail.

First let us warn those readers who do not yet know it, and who have never yet practised it, that it cannot fail to appear long and complicated to them, especially if they only read it superficially.

[1] C. Martha, *The Moralists of the Roman Empire*, Seneca, v, p. 74. (*Vide* Seneca, *De Ira*, iii, 36-37). In the same way M. Payot, in his *Education of the Will*, recommends meditations with definite resolutions; retreats, not once, but three times each year, and during each day frequent reflections upon oneself. "At night, when you go to bed, or during the night-time when you wake up, even in odd moments of rest, what can be easier than to renew your good resolutions? Again, in the morning when you get up, while you are dressing, or on your way to business, what more useful work can you do than to water the plant of your good desires?" (*ibid.*, p. 131).

This is so, as we have already remarked, with every method describing a system of thought—teaching, for example, to read or to write. But as soon as it has been put in action and practised, at the end of a short time it becomes very simple and easy, and is practised without painful effort. The practice of it even becomes more consoling as its fruits become more marvellous. Who among us regrets to-day having learned to read and write, and does not find himself rewarded a hundredfold for the first efforts which learning the art cost him ?

However, there are many living in the world who may be very occupied with their business, and have not the leisure to consecrate a quarter of an hour to it daily—which is really very little to take from a whole day. Therefore, we will indicate, at the end of this article, the way to simplify it, so as not to lose entirely the fruits of an exercise which is regarded as absolutely indispensable to the correction of faults, and advancement in virtue.

Here, then, is the DESCRIPTION of this method, according to S Ignatius. It comprises two parts : an examination of prevision, and then the examination properly so called.

I. THE EXAMINATION OF PREVISION should be done at the end of the morning prayer, or the evening previous, before going to bed. It includes four very natural acts : 1st, *Decide on the subject* of the examination, and determine the point—one only—which is to be borne in mind all day long. 2nd, *Foresee* the occasions that might arise during the same day for correcting such a fault or for practising such a virtue. 3rd, Make a generous *resolution* to triumph over the points determined on. 4th, Finally, *pray* and ask of God the grace to triumph.

This first preparatory exercise, in view of its importance, should be made very seriously, and does not require more than four or five minutes.

Of the four acts which it comprises, and which we have just enumerated, the first only—the choice of a subject—has need of an explanation, the more so since it is the most important. The examination is an instrument very capable of striking decisive blows, but before striking, it is necessary to know what must be aimed at, and to know how to aim well. To be enlightened on this capital point, it is doubtless necessary to question one's director ; but we must first pray and

reflect well before confiding our needs to him: we must propose, but he must decide the plan of the battle. Now several plans are possible.

1st. There is the *dominant fault* to correct. The habitual normal point of attack is there. There is often in us some excess and disorder, and before everything it is necessary to re-establish moral equilibrium and harmony. Since childhood's days we have often been reproached for some fault at home by our relations, at college by our masters—some fault such as being obstinate, proud, quick-tempered, haughty, talkative, abrupt, lazy, and the rest. We are aware ourselves, in hours of meditation, that this failing is most harmful to us, and that if we could get rid of it, all would be well. Also, this fault being nearly always the excess of some good quality, it is simple to ask: What are the good qualities with which we are generally credited? Thus, if we are praised for our sensitiveness, probably we will become very susceptible; if we are impressionable, we will be also easily led to trouble and discouragement; if our nature is very expansive, it will easily become inconsiderate. Our activity may degenerate into eagerness, our dignity into pride, our kindness into weakness, our calm disposition into indolence, our prudence into cunning and duplicity, and so on.

2. *There is also the opposite virtue to be practised.* Sometimes this is an excellent, though indirect, way of attacking the dominant fault. Instead of resolving not to yield again to it, I should practise the opposite virtue. If, for example, disappointments and surprises easily trouble me; if I get irritable when meeting with the slightest opposition to my wishes; in short, if I do not know how to bend and break my will, on each vexatious occasion, I will resolve to say: "God allows it; it is his will. I submit to it with resignation, with love. May his holy will be done."

In order to acquire kindness, gentleness, and goodwill towards persons for whom I feel antipathy, each time I think of them or meet them, I will resolve to see them as children of God, brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has told me that all the good I am able to do to them, he will consider as done to himself. If accustomed to feel pride, haughtiness, or even scorn, I will practise humbling my mind, and putting myself lower than my rivals, and so on.

3. *Finally, there are the fundamental virtues or habits* of the

Christian life, which must be reviewed from time to time to see if they have been well practised in our daily round. Those who have few faults, as well as those who have few virtues, will here find an inexhaustible subject of examination.

For example, the virtue of charity, or the pure and disinterested love of God and one's neighbour. This virtue, as we have seen, has this peculiarity, that in developing it makes all the virtues develop, for it sets all in movement. It will be, therefore, necessary from time to time to take the subject of *purity of intention* in our ordinary actions, and ask, for example, whether it is always to please God that we are acting.

The practice of the *presence of God* has the same power of making all the virtues develop with it.

The *perfection of our ordinary actions* is a fundamental subject. We may say as much of holy indifference, of confidence in God, and of holy trust. Finally, fidelity to all our exercises of piety is a subject of examination which should be frequent, since this same fidelity is the first condition of all progress.

After having chosen a subject for examination, if I find it too vast, I must know how to *divide* it, and so analyse it that it is possible to write down the number of failings. Thus, for example, if I frequently fail in charity to my neighbour, I could divide amendment into four divisions :

1st subject : Never to speak ill of my neighbour, in criticism or injurious words. 2nd subject : To avoid those little faults so frequent in conversation, such as interruptions, arguments, useless contradictions, and the like. 3rd subject : To speak always well of my neighbour, to excuse his awkwardness and faults, to be kindly in words and expression, and the rest. 4th subject : To practise explicit charity, to see and love God in all those who are children of God, brothers of Jesus Christ, or ministers of Christ, whatever their failings or human weaknesses may be.

Then, the subject once chosen, divided, and thus limited, it is necessary to make good and generous resolutions on precise points, and to watch carefully during the day so as not to be unfaithful to them. And this constant attention to oneself, which should never degenerate into toilsome introspection, becomes easy with a little practice and self-control.

That this watch over oneself may not become vague and unavailing, S Ignatius expressly recommends his novices to mark each failing, as soon as committed, by an exterior sign, such as striking the breast if alone, or any other discreet sign when not alone. This is a practice of wonderful efficacy.

Finally, at the end of the day, comes the particular examination properly speaking, which should review the result of this first exercise.

To make it still more efficacious, S Ignatius prescribes self-examination not only at night-time, but also previously at mid-day, by casting a glance over the morning and renewing our good resolutions for the rest of the day; this mid-day examination has become the rule in all communities, and with fervent priests—if only for two or three minutes. However that may be, it should not be dispensed with less than once a day, and it would be inexcusable to find such a burden too heavy.

It now remains to describe the examination itself and to analyse it.

II. THE EXAMINATION, PROPERLY SPEAKING. It comprises, according to S Ignatius, two short preludes, five points, and a *Pater* at the end.

Let us briefly explain them:

The two *preludes* are: 1st, place oneself in the presence of God; 2nd, invoke the help of his grace. These two acts should after all precede every Christian action of any importance, and have nothing special to this exercise; therefore we can omit their discussion. One minute is sufficient for these preludes.

Let us pass to the *five points* which form the body of the examination.

1st, thanksgiving; 2nd, prayer to know one's faults and to detest them; 3rd, search for faults; 4th, contrition; 5th, act of amendment. We will explain them more fully.

1st. *Thanksgiving.* We should begin an examination of conscience with thanksgiving. Gratitude is one of the most pressing needs of every noble heart, and is at the same time a most energetic stimulus to generous actions. Now that we are going to find out our faults, is it not fitting to recall first the graces received, the remembrance of which will render our faults still more regrettable? We wish to

conquer ourselves ; is it not useful to excite our generosity by recognising God's benefits? In order to do it, several methods may be employed.

The *first* consists in thanking God for the principal graces of our whole life. What an immense sheaf to gather, and what a stimulus! This complete remembrance always stirs one profoundly. Sometimes it is one particular grace whose ineffaceable memory is sufficient to excite our gratitude.

The *second* limits itself to the graces of the day. Even in the most ordinary graces, if one knows how to enter into details and to sift them, there are immense treasures of God's goodness and mercy to be discovered.

Third method. Certain souls are drawn to thank God that it has pleased him to preserve them through another day. S Philip Neri marvelled each day at not being abandoned as an ungrateful child by God. S Teresa ceaselessly thanked God for preserving her from hell. These are beautiful models.

Whatever may be the method which is preferred—and it can be varied—thanksgiving to God must not be forgotten, not only for his benefits but also for the lavish way he has bestowed them, and the perseverance with which he has repeated them, in spite of all our unfaithfulness. About two minutes should be given to this first point.

2nd. The second point is the *prayer* to recognise our faults and to detest them. " Grant me, O my God, the grace to know how many times this morning, or this evening, I have failed in my resolution on such a fault, the grace to feel deeply the disorder of my fallen nature, and the courage to correct myself." In this spirit one might recite the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus,* or any other prayer. One minute is sufficient for this second exercise.

3rd. The third is *self-examination* or *discovering one's faults.* Here it is only a question of the failings in the morning's particular resolution, and this is what distinguishes this very particular examination from the general examination of other faults which we might have committed.

This search consists in reviewing the day, hour by hour, action by action, but always following the same order. Our account of faults should be clear, exact, and not exaggerated : it should be done without scruple, *ex æquo et bono,* with a rapidity which practice will soon help us to acquire. Then it will be necessary to *mark* the number of these faults, either

in a small notebook, divided into columns for the days and weeks,[1] or by the help of a rosary made expressly for the purpose; the methods do not matter provided they register absolutely, like a good merchant who does not trust to his memory. If only voluntary failings are being taken into account, then the involuntary ones must not be marked, nor *a fortiori* the failings in another subject. Otherwise the result would lack unity, our efforts would be scattered, our accounts muddled and exaggerated.

Finally, it is very useful to compare the number of the present day with that of the day before, and of the week, and of the whole month, in order to verify if advancement or falling away is taking place.

Three or four minutes are sufficient to make up this account. Why, in fact, spend longer in counting, seeking, and notifying the wounds, without taking the time to heal them? Now the two following, and very much more decisive, exercises, are employed in healing them.

4th. The fourth point is *contrition*, which consists in sincerely deploring our faults, and in expressing great sorrow for them to God.

For that purpose different methods are employed in turn.

The *first* consists in reciting an act of contrition several times, and very slowly.

The *second* is to meditate on one of the scenes of the Passion, choosing that one which appeals to us most.

The *third* makes us consider the danger we are in, if we do not correct ourselves, of abusing God's graces, irritating him, hardening ourselves, falling still lower, perhaps losing ourselves completely, and also losing other souls which we might have saved, had we been more interior and more perfect.

A *last* method consists in comparing our own obstinate ingratitude with God's inexhaustible mercy and kindness to us.

Observe that contrition will develop more in our hearts as we seek to express it outwardly with feeling. For that, use formulas which are most appealing: take up a crucifix, kiss it with humility and repentance, cover it with tears, . . .

5th. The fifth and last point is a *firm purpose of amendment*. This point, and the preceding one, are the most important. It is necessary, therefore, to reserve for them half

[1] A scheme for this practice of noting the number of faults committed may be found in a valuable little work by Canon Beaudenom, *Pratique de l'examen particulier* (Lethielleux or Librairie Saint Paul, Paris).

of the total time of the self-examination, say half of the allotted quarter of an hour. If time pressed, it would be better to hasten the other points, contrary to what we might be tempted to think.

It consists, in the first place, in order to ensure our good amendment for the future, in imposing a penance for each well verified failing in the past. To so many faults, should correspond so many times the *Ave Maria*, so many little acts of mortification, or even so many strokes of the discipline, and so on. According to the just remark of Rodriguez: "When a horse has felt the spur, after he has shied, he feels its proximity and does not require it again on a similar occasion."

In the second place, it consists in repeating the examination of prevision of the morning, adding to it all the new points which the day's experience has revealed to us. Therefore, it is necessary *to specify* once again the fault to be conquered, or the virtue to be acquired, upon a certain point; *to foresee* the occasions which might present themselves, in order to avoid being taken by surprise; *to determine* very sincerely to conquer all difficulties; finally, *to pray* much, because the grace of this fifth point all lies in prayer.

This prayer can finish with a *Pater* or an *Ave Maria*. At S Sulpice, this is replaced by that act of self-consecration to the Most Blessed Virgin: *O Domina mea, sancta Maria . . .*[1]

Such is S Ignatius' method of self-examination, which has worked such marvels for centuries, to which so many generations of priests, of religious, of simple faithful, owe the correction of their faults, and their rapid advance in the ways of the perfect life.

It can be understood, in fact, how, by concentrating all our efforts on one single very particular point, and by raising ourselves little by little, progressively and methodically, the victory is morally certain, given time and goodwill. I say "with time," for anything instantaneous is outside the normal ways, and it is clear that certain faults, notably those

[1] O Domina mea, sancta Maria! me in tuam benedictam fidem ac singularem custodiam, et in sinum misericordiæ tuæ, hodie et quotidie, et in hora exitus mei, animam meam et corpus meum tibi commendo; omnem spem et consolationem meam, omnes angustias et miserias meas, vitam et finem vitæ meæ tibi committo; ut per tuam sanctissimam intercessionem, et per tua merita, omnia mea dirigantur et disponantur opera, secundum tuam tuique Filii voluntatem. Amen.

which come from nature and temperament, will be slow to reform, above all when they have not been taken in youth, and when age has rooted them still more deeply. Also, never be discouraged or disheartened, however many falls may be experienced, even after a very sincere conversion. This is the price of victory, but it is morally certain, as all those who have had the courage and the generosity to apply it and persevere in it to the end, bear witness.

All, without exception, have repeated with assurance the words of S Paul: We can do all, absolutely all, with the grace of God: *omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.*

Abridged Method.—The only objection that may be made to this method is that it does not appear practicable for all, especially busy people in the world who are pressed for time by their occupations. For them we have already promised to add an abridged or *simplified* method, making it impossible to say "I have no time," thus covering with a false pretext their want of courage and weakness of soul.

You have no time, you say, to give a quarter of an hour to this self-examination? If that is really so, do not be discouraged, but give four or five minutes a day to it. You can simplify the whole, without altering the essential points. You may, for example, omit the preludes, as well as the first point (thanksgiving); but the rest must be adhered to.

After having collected your thoughts and placed yourself in the *presence* of God—which must never be omitted—you can run through the four last points in a quick but very attentive way.

1st. *Prayer* to obtain grace to know your faults, and to detest them; 2nd. Rapid *examination*, or search for faults; 3rd. *Contrition*; 4th. *Firm act of amendment*, and thought for the morrow. This series of acts is so natural that you go through them instinctively of yourself.

And if for your help you find it necessary to read some set formulas, you will find some excellent ones in a short, well-known treatise[1] which will quickly teach you to formulate your own sentiments, and to express them simply to God, without recourse to any book.

[1] *Pratique de l'examen particulier*, anon. (Canon Beaudenom, whose wonderful little books have been republished, translated into every language, and sold in great numbers. Lethielleux or Librairie S. Paul, Paris).—By the same author, *Pratique progressive de la Confession; Preparation et actions de grâces pour la sainte Communion.*

CHAPTER III

Frequent and Progressive Confession

AFTER prayer and self-examination, which are interior spiritual exercises, we must speak of those which are exterior, or which have their object in nourishing the soul from without. And among these we will first study the two sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, the frequent use of which the Church proposes to all souls desirous of Christian perfection, as the two most abundant sources of light and strength.

We have not here to go over the dogmatic and moral theology of these two sacraments. We will suppose that to be already known, and we will limit ourselves to the study of them as very powerful instruments of perfection. We know, in fact, that all the sacraments of the new Law have a double efficacy, the special one producing its effect *ex opere operato*, and without other concurrence on our part beyond placing no obstacles before it. Thus the worthy reception of the Eucharist necessarily increases sanctifying grace in us, and the fitting reception of the sacrament of Penance gives us back this sanctifying grace if we have lost it, or increases it if we have kept it. The other efficacy, *ex opere operantis*, arises from our own positive good dispositions or from the degree of fervour with which we receive them; it is proportioned to a more or less generous, and also more or less intelligent and methodical co-operation on our part. It is by this second efficacy that the sacrament is completed or perfected by spiritual exercises, enabling us to derive every benefit from it. We could compare it to a deep spring, where a certain industry is required to learn how to draw water, or even to an infinitely rich mine, where a certain skill can discover the most precious treasures.

It is this skill, or this hidden industry, of which we would at least give the reader some account, and we will begin with the sacrament of Penance and progressive confession. Now every good confession aspires to three things: *self-knowledge*, *self-revelation*, and *self-reformation*.

ARTICLE I

Self-knowledge

It is an easy step from the examination of conscience, of which we have just spoken, to this new and more general examination. It may even be said that they accompany and complete each other. After having each day given battle to our faults, or rather, to only one of our faults, or to a precise point of our dominant fault; after having each evening, for a week, made an exact account of our failings, it will be easy to recall them to mind, and it will appear quite natural to us that we should go to deposit the burden of these faults at the feet of a confessor, and humbly beg absolution for them.

Certainly, if, in the course of the week, we had committed other faults of another kind, we would include them, but the first burden would be sufficient motive for recourse to the sacrament of Penance.

Always, if the faults were but imperfections and not venial sins, in the strict sense of the word, in order to have matter for absolution it would be necessary to add, "I accuse myself also of all the faults of my past life," while exciting contrition for all sins, visualised at least as a whole, and by a general motive such as the feeling of past ingratitude, etc.

For a person who habitually makes his self-examination each evening the examination for confession should be short and without excessive preoccupation: *Short*, for otherwise it encroaches on the time destined for contrition and purpose of amendment, much the more important task; *without preoccupation* or scruple, because the accusation of venial sins is optional, since they can be effaced in other ways, without any obligation to confess them afterwards. (Suarez, S Thomas, de Lugo, Gury, etc.).

However, absolution is very useful for venial sins, either for a more complete purification, or for a diminution of temporal punishment which still remains, or, finally, in order to acquire special graces against renewed falls.

It is none the less true that a good act of contrition is sufficient to efface venial sins, even those which may have been forgotten, or about which one no longer thinks; but if we have formally excepted them from our sorrow, as

sins we will not repent of, pardon is not given until we repent, at least by a general repentance which embraces all sin.

Here is a great relief for timid or scrupulous consciences, and a reason for them to be content rather with a short, than a too long, self-examination. Let them hasten to pass on to contrition and to the firm purpose of amendment, which are still more important conditions.[1]

ARTICLE II

Self-revelation

After thus being prepared by examination of conscience and contrition, it remains to MAKE ONESELF KNOWN to one's confessor, with all one's faults and wretchedness, to obtain pardon for them. To pardon Mary Magdalen or the good thief, Jesus had no need of previous confession, for being God, he knew the most secret thoughts of the heart. But the priest, who takes the place of Jesus here, cannot do in like manner, because, being but a man, he does not know the soul's secrets. Therefore they must be made known, and the state of the soul must be revealed. Without that, the priest, as *judge*, could neither judge nor absolve; the priest, as *physician*, could not heal the evil which he does not even know.

It is true that accusation is only exacted, under pain of sacrilege, for mortal sins when they are certain. A really serious doubt may dispense from the strict obligation, whether this doubt bears upon the existence of the guilty act, or upon its gravity, or upon the consent. Such is the theological rule in its general terms. But souls who are anxious to correct themselves not only of the grosser habits, but also of their simple faults, and to acquire virtues which they lack, are not limited by that. They are seriously striving towards Christian perfection from love of God, from zeal for the beauty of their soul and the salvation of others, and they are accustomed to extend their accusation as far as they judge to be useful to their good, and to their spiritual well-being.

[1] See the subjects and sentiments for contrition in the work already quoted, *Pratique progressive*, t. I, p. 26-61.

With that object they aspire less to a long and complicated accusation than to one which simply bears upon the important points, those which appear decisive to us because they compromise our spiritual life most.

Thus, many pious faithful begin their accusation in this way: "Father, at my last confession, which was at such and such date, I promised to keep watch over myself upon such a particular point, and to employ such means . . . Now there is an improvement in this and a falling away in that . . . moreover, I attribute it to such a cause. . . ." Here details are stated in a clear and precise way, as short as possible, but sufficient to make ourselves well-understood and judged.

After that one can submit to the confessor without waiting for him to take the initiative, the particular resolution—only one—and the means to be taken, as the Holy Spirit inspires us, in order to be faithful to it till the following confession. One then receives with confidence and submission the advice and the decision which he will judge useful to our souls.

The reader recognises here the PROGRESSIVE METHOD OF S IGNATIUS, already employed for the daily examination of conscience. It *specialises and divides the effort*: it specialises to prevent the aim being vague, and therefore states it very clearly. It divides in order to make each step more easy, and to advance stage by stage, right on to the final aim which has been proposed. It is the military tactics of a besieging force employed in the field of battle of the soul's spiritual life.

ARTICLE III

Self-reformation

After Absolution has once been pronounced over the repentant sinner, is all finished? Much more is necessary. It is not sufficient to *pardon* the guilty one, the EVIL MUST BE CURED. The confessor is not only a judge, he is also a physician, and the divine mercy should not be less evident in the latter rôle than in the former. Also The Council of Trent (Sess. XIV, c. i) calls the sacrament of Penance not only a *pardon* but a *remedy, remedium vitæ*; and S Augustine tells us, that this remedy for our sickness

and languors is composed of the Blood of Jesus Christ, *de sanguine suo fecit remedium ægrotis*, and also of our tears, because God, who created us without our help, will neither save us nor heal us without our co-operation.

Absolution is a preparation for the remedy. Through sanctifying grace given or increased, divine life is born or flourishes again; lost or dead merits live again; concupiscence diminishes; rights to actual graces are given again to us. And yet, however precious all this may be, pardon, the love of God, our refound merit, our rights re-established—all these good things are yet only the means to acquire a permanent healing, and the permanent restoration of spiritual life in us.

I would even say this. Pardon *alone*, and without applying a remedy for the evil, a pardon so easily obtained of faults so quickly effaced, would perhaps sometimes be DANGEROUS. It might weaken the fear of evil in our consciences, or diminish the firm purpose of amendment. Indeed, why bother, if pardon is so easy? Doubtless an honest soul would not openly admit such a thought, such an abuse of the infinite mercy of God; but might it not sometimes act under this latent impression, and through its influence?

Therefore it is wholly necessary to add to our pardon the remedy which is to heal and to restore us permanently to health.

This remedy comprises firstly *satisfaction* for past faults. The penitent asks his confessor for "*penance* and *absolution*." But this formula has fallen away very much from its primitive sense. In the primitive Church, instead of the light and easy penances which confessors impose to-day, heavy penances and austerities were imposed. And even in the centuries which preceded our own, the sacramental penances still kept more or less their character of medicinal and expiatory satisfaction.

The weakening of faith and fervour have perhaps induced the Church to diminish the strictness of primitive discipline. And yet the sanctions of divine justice are unalterable, and we have not heard it said that the strictness of expiation has in any way diminished in purgatory. The needs of souls remain also the same, in the struggle against self and the lure of the passions.

For a sensual life it will be always good, and even indis-

pensable, to prescribe fasts and austerities ; to a wasted life, a " rule of life," and prayers ; to one whose sole thought is self, various mortifications ; to love of wealth and money, alms and donations ; to greediness and sensuality, voluntary privations in eating, drinking, or in the comforts of life, and so on.

These VOLUNTARY MORTIFICATIONS could be imposed either as expiatory of the past, as penance strictly speaking, or as a preservative for the future. And if the confessor does not like to take the initiative, then it is the penitents themselves, who must take it with his approbation. This is the cost of their complete cure, but we venture to think that cure is thus assured.

In spite of the relaxation of Christian energy in these present days, Holy Church yet counts a large number of generous souls who understand the wonderful secret of mortification, and who, under a wise direction, do penance for themselves and for the conversion of sinners. These admirable souls are the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

If the Holy Spirit inspires you with *grace to imitate them*, open your heart on the subject to your usual confessor, and if he does not understand you, seek a true director of souls. Even then, if he should not discover a high vocation in you—for this is rare—he will add to the sacramental Penance a rule of life, and a vigorous discipline, which will assure, after a very short time, the complete restoration of spiritual health to your soul.

As to the FREQUENCY of confession, it varies very much with the attractions and needs of each individual. Usually it is weekly for beginners, and bi-monthly for those souls who have already received some formation. However, S Ignatius Loyola, S Charles Borromeo, S Alphonsus Liguori and other saints confessed every day. And S Bonaventure advises his novices to confess daily, or at least every three days. It is for the soul's director to decide.[1]

[1] According to the decree of the S. Cong. of Indulgences, of Feb. 14, 1906, weekly confession is no longer necessary *in order to gain indulgences*, in the case of " all Christians in a state of grace who are accustomed to receive Holy Communion daily, even though refraining from so doing on one, or two, days a week."

CHAPTER IV

Frequent Communion, Holy Mass, and Visits to the Blessed Sacrament

IT is related in the parable of the Prodigal Son, that his father, after having pardoned him, made a great feast, to restore his exhausted strength and to rejoice with him. The Feast of the Holy Eucharist, therefore, is the natural consequence of pardon in the sacrament of Penance.

We are going to study the Feast itself, or *Holy Communion*, then *Holy Mass* which prepares it, and the *Visit* which follows it, considering them solely as spiritual exercises.

ARTICLE I

Holy Communion

I. Its Frequency. Holy Communion was instituted by our Lord to be the nourishment of our soul and the bread which sustains its life. *This is the bread that came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he that eateth this bread shall live for ever* (John vi, 59). It was the thought and desire of Christ that the Eucharist should be our daily bread, just as the manna was in the desert.

The early Christians so understood it, as S Luke tells us : *and they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread* (Acts ii, 42).

In spite of the laxity which gradually crept in with the flight of time, Fathers and Doctors often recalled this doctrine, and the Council of Trent, while limiting the strict precept of the Church to the Easter Communion, did not omit to add a desire in favour of more frequent and even daily communion : "The holy Council," we read (Sess. XXII, c. vi), "would desire that the faithful who assist at every mass be not content with spiritual communion, but receive actually the Eucharistic Sacrament."

It is not only laxity which keeps people away from the

frequent use of the Eucharist; it is the false pretext of respect for holy things, and the fear of profaning them by frequent use, and even the pretext of honouring and venerating the Eucharist. Jansenism aggravated these scruples upon the required dispositions necessary to approach with benefit the holy Eucharist, and the most perfect dispositions were exacted. The Popes, the guardians of sound doctrine and tradition, did not cease to protest against these exaggerations. Notably Innocent XI, on February 12, 1679, and Alexander VIII, on December 16, 1690, condemned these abuses and the errors of rigorists.

Again recently, Pius X, in his decree of December 20, 1905, at the request of the bishops, exposed once more the traditional doctrine, and established precise rules and practices.

After having recalled the history of these controversies, he first specified the nature and aim of this divine institution, which is to be the remedy for sin, and not a reward of merit and fervour. Here are his words: "Jesus Christ and the Church desire that all the faithful approach the sacred banquet every day, so that being united to God by this sacrament, they may thereby receive the strength to repress their passions, to purify themselves from the slight faults which present themselves every day, and avoid the grave faults to which human frailty is exposed. Therefore the Eucharist is not meant as a favour and reward for the virtues of those who approach it (S Augustine, Sermon 57 on S Matthew: Lord's Prayer, v, 7). Thus, the Council of Trent calls The Eucharist: *the antidote which delivers us from daily faults, and* preserves *us from mortal sins.* (Sess. XIII, c. ii.)"[1]

This fundamental principle once well established, there follow *practical rules*—at least the chief ones—which result from it, and which the aforesaid decree puts into relief. We will sum them up, quoting word for word the essential passages:

1st. No person, if he is in a state of grace, and if he approaches the Holy Eucharist with a right intention, can be turned away from it.

2nd. The right intention consists in approaching the

[1] *Acta SS Pii* X.—Read also what is prescribed with regard to general communions "according to rule," on certain days, in religious communities and boarding schools.

Holy Eucharist not from habit or vanity, or from human respect, but in order to do God's will, to unite oneself to him more intimately by charity, and, thanks to this divine remedy, to wage war against one's faults and infirmities.

Two conditions only are therefore exacted for frequent and even daily communion: 1st, a state of grace; 2nd, a right intention, putting on one side human motives and routine, and implying supernatural motives.

Hence this FIRST CONCLUSION: *the state of grace is not sufficient by itself.* Certainly it is sufficient for preventing an act of sacrilege, and even for performing a meritorious action, for every act is meritorious when it is good in itself and done in God's name. A state of grace is sufficient in order to receive validly the effect produced by the Sacrament *ex opere operato* (of itself), namely, an increase of sanctifying grace, and consequently to obtain a new degree of glory and happiness in heaven, for these degrees exactly correspond to the degrees of sanctifying grace obtained on earth, and preserved till death.

But there is a reverse side to the medal, for the same act, good in itself, could draw upon us terrible punishments in purgatory or upon earth, if done with thoughtlessness, indifference, coldness, and carelessness; this, without being a mortal sin, would be an injury offered to a more than royal guest. All these venial sins involved in such a communion—without making it invalid, and without taking away in any degree the sacramental grace—which is certain —diminish however the fervour of God's friendship, and expose us to the punishment of his justice.

It is necessary for us, then,—and this is our SECOND CONCLUSION,—in order to make not only *good*, but truly *useful* communions, to add to the *state of grace* a *right intention*,[1] that is to say, a will generously desiring the purpose of this medicinal institution, namely, our healing. We must resolutely wish our weakness healed and desire to become better and more perfect by co-operating with *divine grace.*

This is the second condition imposed by the decree in order to authorise frequent and daily communion.

Without this desire to be healed, without this generous effort in helping the power of the remedy, we should gain

[1] Quam bonum Israël Deus, his qui recto sunt corde! (Ps. lxxii).

little profit from it, and we should be faced with the worst deceptions.

Even natural remedies, in order to be efficacious, demand the co-operation of the vital forces of the organism. Upon a person exhausted, and without strength, the best remedy will be without effect. And in order to derive benefit from any food, at least a little appetite is needed.

On the contrary, with this co-operation, it is impossible for a true remedy not to effect a cure. This is what the decree adds: "Being given (this right will) and a firm purpose of amendment in all sincerity, it is not possible that those who communicate every day should not correct themselves of venial sins, and little by little of their affection for these sins."

And on this occasion the same decree recalled the double efficacy of the sacraments, of which one operates of itself, *ex opere operato*, and the other with the co-operation of the faithful, *ex opere operantis*, an important distinction which has furnished the principle of a solution, equally distant from strictness and laxity.

Therefore, confess and communicate as often as you can, always with proper care, and never make this frequency depend on the degree of virtue you have already acquired, since, on the contrary, it is a question of acquiring it in a still more eminent degree. It is not fervour which is required, but good-will only, the will to seek there the cure. Besides, without this will, one would soon tire of communicating.

Should you have the misfortune to fall again into serious and grave faults, do not mind. If you struggle on, if you pray, if you communicate often, very often, there is the remedy. With persistence in the struggle, with prayer and good communions, the final triumph, sooner or later, is assured.

II. Methods.—Even in receiving holy Communion, it is good to know some methods, and to borrow forms of prayer from the saints. The method, in fact, far from being a prison which holds the aspirations of our heart captive, on the contrary stimulates and directs them without ever stifling them. It is a formation for beginners, for man is an educated being: our ideas, our sentiments, are composed of what our education has given us, and

show, without our knowing it, the circumstances under which we have been brought up. For advanced or more perfect souls, the method still remains a valuable help. In days of lassitude or distress, it awakens slumbering remembrance, and stimulates new aspirations. We will propose then methods for communion, just as we have done for prayer and confession. Here the division is indicated by the three following elements : the preparation for Holy Communion, the act itself, and then the thanksgiving.

1. *Remote* PREPARATION is habitual purity of heart. The *immediate preparation* is hearing holy mass, about which we will shortly speak. But it can also be *more proximate*, and this is what we are chiefly concerned with.

" Begin the preceding evening," says S Francis de Sales to his Philothea,[1] " to prepare yourself for Holy Communion by repeated aspirations and expressions of love, retiring to rest a little earlier, so that you can also arise earlier : if you awake during the night, fill your heart and your mind at once with sweet thoughts, by means of which your soul will be perfumed to receive its spouse, who, watching while you sleep, prepares to bring you a thousand graces and favours, if on your part you are disposed to receive them. In the morning rise with great joy for the happiness you expect."

Then it is necessary to dispose ourselves by great purity of body and heart to receive the Bread of Angels, regretting that ours is not angelic purity, the only purity which is fitting.

The *immediate* preparation consists in hearing mass well, and in making acts of faith, adoration, humility, contrition, and love. We should also endeavour to make all these sentiments as vivid as possible, and even feel them—although this is not indispensable—in order to make them stronger.

And for this purpose it is good—according to the method of S Ignatius—to evoke the smallest sensible details, with the aid of the memory and the imagination, until our attention is vividly seized and fixed by an image thus formed in our minds.

This is what is called *the composition of place*. For example, the likeness of our Lord in the different periods of his existence : his divine features, his appearance, his tears

[1] *Introd.*, II p., c. xxi.

shed, his blood spilled during the scourging and at Calvary, his heart opened by the lance, his divine perfections—we must make a striking picture of it all.

Doubtless it is not for us to raise, even partly, the veil of faith, and contemplate the invisible—a very rare grace, accorded to mystic saints in *infused contemplation*—but only to make the abstract truths which are hidden from our senses more real in order to penetrate them better. Rarely will a purely abstract thought move our hearts and inflame a zeal for perfection. Man is made thus: he generally acts under the force of an attraction more or less sensible, according to his temperament. The emotions chiefly move us; the pure idea rarely moves us without emotion.

It is also good to have a particular intention in each communion, so as to strengthen our desire to make it well: for example, to obtain the victory over this particular fault, to triumph over that particular trial, to obtain some favour for Holy Church, for oneself, or one's friends, to relieve certain particular souls in purgatory, and the like.

2. After this preparation comes the ACT OF COMMUNION ITSELF. Faith and humility should dominate and inspire all the other sentiments: adoration, contrition, love, desire, oblation. . . . In order to express them, certain persons use forms of prayer appealing to their piety: they are praiseworthy but should not be imposed. It is best, perhaps, to suspend all exterior prayer, to enter into a profound self-recollection, and to keep oneself in a loving silence and expectation at the feet of Christ approaching.

3. Silent and loving adoration begins the THANKSGIVING. "As soon as you have received our Saviour, and possess him within you," said S Teresa[1] to her daughters, "try to close the eyes of the body, and opening those of the soul, look into your heart; for I tell you, I tell you yet again, and will tell you willingly a hundred times, if you do this each time you communicate, and if you keep your soul pure enough to deserve this favour often, he will show himself to you *in some degree*, and then, yielding to your desires, *he will reveal himself entirely*."

These words—among the most beautiful S Teresa wrote—clearly make allusion to the mystic favour we spoke of just now, which our saint so often enjoyed, and which

[1] *Way of Perfection*, ch. xxxiv.

she desired her Carmelite daughters, called like her to the contemplative life, to share with her.

If we are not worthy of such a high grace, and one so entirely gratuitous, we can at least aspire to make the Presence of God within us become *sensible*, and *realized* by us. And although the sensible may not always be the real, it imitates it however, it is the copy of it, replaces it in its absence, and therefore can give our piety an ardent faith which transfigures it and renders it capable of the most heroic acts.

In spite of their profound distinction—since here the sensation of the divine is subjective, and there truly objective—the two phenomena have received, by analogy, the same name of contemplation. The epithet *passive* or *infused* is reserved for the extraordinary or strictly mystic contemplation, and that of *active* or *acquired* for the ordinary contemplation of all fervent souls, as we explain more fully in our treatise on mystical theology.

With souls so near to God, so accustomed to be in his presence, the act of faith will be spontaneous and ardent, and will be sufficient to draw them on to acts of adoration, love, offering, supplication, etc. These acts are within the reach of all minds and all souls of good-will. It is sufficient for them, at the beginning, to help themselves by using some of the numerous formulas inspired by the ardent piety of saints.

These souls will soon learn to converse heart to heart with the divine Guest whom they have received, and will know how to keep him company, avoiding the incivility of neglecting the great King who has come to honour their humble dwelling, and not losing any of the treasures of grace which he brings them.

Will it then be necessary to fix for the great happiness of the act of thanksgiving, any *definite time*? S Alphonsus asks for a whole hour, or half an hour. The least that we can impose upon ourselves should be a quarter of an hour of thanksgiving. Such is the customary practice of all fervent priests, as well as that of the faithful laity.

ARTICLE II

Holy Mass

Holy mass is the natural preparation for Communion, and daily mass that for daily Communion. This pious usage has become the habitual practice of all fervent Christians, even those who, from whatever motive, are sometimes obliged to be content with a spiritual Communion.

The WAYS of hearing mass well are numerous ; the essential requirement is that they should stir up a lively faith in the souls of the faithful, and an ardent love for the adorable Victim who, upon the altar, is immolating himself as truly as on Calvary, though in an unbloody manner. Therefore, each is free to choose that way which, in his own case, is best fitted to achieve this end, according to his personal preference.

The first method of hearing mass consists in following devoutly all the prayers recited at the altar by the priest, with whom we unite ourselves in mind and in heart. Though this appears the most natural and the simplest method, it is not within the ability of everybody. Not only is it difficult for a person to follow the missal in its entirety, with the daily variations of prayers used at mass, but the majority of people lack the power to understand the literal or liturgical meaning of such a book. Hence the reading of a book like the missal would become a study only, instead of a pious practice. Comparatively few, besides those in Seminaries, and in Religious Houses, could use this method with profit.

The other ways of hearing mass refer less to the letter than to the spirit of holy mass. This divine sacrifice is offered to God by the Church for four chief ends : (1) to *adore* his infinite majesty ; (2) to make *satisfaction* to his Justice ; (3) to *thank* him for his benefits ; (4) to *petition* him, and to lay our wants before him. And thus the time at holy mass is usually divided into four almost equal parts, in order that the hearer may discharge his four great duties in union with the intentions of the celebrant.

After the introductory *Confiteor*, recited at the foot of the altar steps before the priest ascends them—a moment during which the hearts of celebrant and faithful should be full of contrition and deep humility—the duty of

Adoration is fulfilled from the beginning of mass to the first Gospel; this constitutes the first part. In the second part, from the Gospel to the Elevation, the duty of making satisfaction to divine Justice may be discharged. The third part, from the Elevation to the Communion, is spent in thanksgiving for God's blessings. Finally, in the fourth part, which lasts from the Communion until the end of mass, Communion is received, at least spiritually, by those who are unable to receive sacramentally, and each prays to God for all the graces which he needs, asking in the name of the infinite merits of his divine Son. Finally, the soul concludes with sentiments of thanksgiving.

The words which express these different sentiments are readily to be found in all Catholic prayer-books. From such manuals each one can choose for himself, and even learn by heart, those acts which attract him most. They serve both as models to be imitated, and as aids in times of dryness and desolation.

The methods and forms of prayer should be varied—for forms that are too familiar cease to impress the mind. It is true that, in order to bear fruit in our souls, these methods demand sustained effort and reflection. And there are certain tepid and distracted minds which, particularly at the beginning of their soul's conversion, are but little capable of sustaining such efforts. It is better to advise them to rest content with nothing more than reading, in the form of meditation, some subject connected with the Holy Eucharist, in a carefully chosen book.

Reading of this kind can lead to the most entrancing discoveries, which will attract a soul forcibly to a higher life and to still greater perfection through devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

ARTICLE III

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament

It is the well-established custom to pay a visit of thanks after an invitation to some feast. And this reason alone would justify the daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament as a sequel to the daily Communion.

But there is a still better reason. The Holy Sacrifice of the mass being the centre to which all the mysteries of faith and Christian worship are attached, or—to use the com-

parison of S Francis de Sales—being "among religious exercises as the sun is among the stars," it should be in like manner the centre of attraction for our minds, our hearts, and our whole life.

After having in the morning, at sunrise, received our homage, enlightened and strengthened our souls, and rejoiced our hearts by Holy Communion, our Lord should again in the evening, at sunset, see us once more at his feet, full of thanksgiving for the past day—perhaps also in confusion and repentance—in order to let us place upon his Heart the labour and fatigue of the day, before taking our nightly rest, thinking still of him, who alone can give us perfect rest: *in pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam*, as the evening office chants so piously.

There is *nothing official about this pious visit.* No law prescribes it, no bell calls us to it, no crowd of faithful awaits us there. Only the setting sun and the burden of the day invite us.

Therefore, on our entrance into the church, as soon as we have approached as near as possible to the sanctuary, as if to have a more vivid impression of being better heard, let us listen with confidence to the voice of our Lord himself inviting us to come to him to be relieved and comforted, we who are so often heavily laden and burdened. *Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos* (Matt. xi, 28).

Responding to this gentle invitation, which should touch the hardest heart, tell him your needs, your requests, your desires, above all, your desire to love him more and to become more holy. If your poverty is so great that you know of nothing to tell him, and remain dumb, your exterior attitude at least speaks for you. You are on your knees, and that alone is a prayer, an act of affection, an act of humility, a good desire, because you are there freely, and this spontaneous act alone has such a value that it is equivalent to all those acts which others know better how to express. Besides, here again, you can assist yourself with some formulas of devotion, either learnt by heart, or read in some book of devotion, as e.g. *The Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*, by S Alphonsus, where one finds the soul and the heart of a saint, all illumined with light and warmth, to rekindle ardour and enlighten us.

You could also accomplish your *review of the day* in this

evening hour, and make your self-examination at the feet of our Lord.

As to the *length* of the visit, measure it by your devotion. At first it might be short. Should it last but two minutes, if repeated faithfully every day, it would produce, at length, a very sensible amelioration of your life. Later on, with increasing fervour, you would find it profitable to extend it to a quarter of an hour, which is relatively little in comparison to that of so many saints, who prolonged it to half an hour, and even found several hours were too short.

CHAPTER V

Spiritual Reading

IN all the preceding spiritual exercises, we have seen the precious help which a book of devotion can give us. Now we must discuss this fact in the light of a principle and, in order to raise ourselves in the ways of perfection, explain the necessity of having recourse frequently to spiritual reading and of giving to it a part in the routine of each of our days.

Let us examine its *advantages* and its *method*.

ARTICLE I

Advantages

Man is a teachable being; he needs to be instructed by others, and it is READING which completes, and if necessary replaces, the teaching of the director. We only know what we have learnt in this way; and even the inventions of genius are but new combinations of ideas formerly acquired by instruction received. In a still stronger sense is this true of religious truths, which the human mind could never invent, since they are for the most part beyond reason though not contrary to it. So the apostle declared that faith comes by hearing: *fides ex auditu* (Rom. x, 17). And as reading is the easiest way of learning, it is to reading that we must have recourse every day, either in fighting against religious ignorance, which is the social peril of our times, or in order to enrich our minds and our hearts with the treasures of sacred science, accumulated for twenty centuries by the most powerful brains of Christendom and of humanity.

In the assemblies of the *primitive Church*, when no one could read, the Scriptures were read aloud, also the Homilies of the Fathers and the Acts of the Martyrs, and these readings were held in so great esteem that the office of Reader was raised to the dignity of an Order: it is, in fact, one of

the four *minor Orders*. Without being endowed with this sacred character, we still see, in certain model parishes, the simple faithful, who, on certain days, read pious works publicly to the profit of all those who willingly meet together to be edified, or who could not themselves read in the privacy of their homes.

In this way these good readers imitate and continue the universal tradition of all religious orders where spiritual reading is prescribed at certain hours of the day, as one can see in the *Conferences*, and the *Institutions of Cassian*, or in the monastic rules of S Basil, of S Benedict, etc.

In the rule of S Benedict, the part given to the exercise of reading is of surprising frequency and length. At all times it had to be done at the prescribed hours, and when it was done in private, superiors saw that each was faithful to it. It is impossible to have a better indication of the inestimable value and necessity of this holy exercise.

A good book is, in fact, like a preacher who can be made to speak when we wish, who can be stopped at will in order to be heard again and questioned, or in order to be answered. It repeats its doctrinal instructions, precepts and advice as many times as desired, and gives pressing exhortations to obey them.

According to the wise remark of Père Berthier,[1] " It is a *monitor* who reprimands us in secret, a *friend* who cannot be suspected of deceiving us, a *judge* who decides impartially, a *prophet* who announces the truth without flattery. Neither is it importunate, since one leaves it and resumes it when one wishes; nor argumentative, since it produces its thoughts without discussion; nor indiscreet, since it gives advice without knowing if we follow it; nor susceptible to jealousy, since it leaves us entire liberty to differ from its counsels or to prefer another's."

Such a preacher cannot fail to produce marvels, and it is to this that we owe the conversion of S Augustine and that of S Ignatius Loyola.

[1] *Reflex. spir.*, Bk. v, p. 234.

ARTICLE II

Method

But in order to derive every benefit from this pious exercise, two things are necessary—*to choose* the book well, and *to read it well.*

I. For the CHOICE OF A BOOK the most simple thing to do is to consult one's director ; however, there are general principles that it is good to bear in mind.

Before every other book, the *Holy Bible*, which is the book *par excellence*, must be the object of our reading, and the early Fathers are unanimous in praising its divine virtue ; it is the Word of God, inspired without doubt to men who, in writing it, did not lay aside their personality and their own genius, nor their way of writing and interpreting the thought of God, but were preserved from all error through the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

However, among the books of the Old and New Testaments all are not equally easy to understand, nor within the reach of all minds. It is necessary to know how to choose, and above all we should prefer the Holy Gospels, which can be understood by all.

After the study of the Holy Scriptures, the *Homilies* of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, which explain them, are a substantial and strong nourishment which every cultivated mind will find an inexhaustible mine of solid doctrine and pious edification.

The *Lives of the Saints* are undeniably the most accessible reading, and the most attractive. "*Exempla trahunt*," says the proverb, and in moving us to imitate them they teach us both doctrine and morality.

In these days the progress of historical criticism has brought forth a whole class of hagiography, wherein the lives of the saints are related in an edifying way, and accurately. They can be used with much fruit.[1]

However, history is not altogether sufficient to instruct us in ascetical doctrine. We must, besides, have recourse to didactic treatises on spirituality, such as the *Introduction to a Devout Life*, by S Francis de Sales, together with

[1] See above all "*The Saints*," pub. Lecoffre-Gabalda, under the editorship of M. Joly, of the Institute. Ninety-five volumes have already appeared, of which a number have been translated into English.

his *Treatise on the Love of God*, the *Exercises* of S Ignatius, *Christian Perfection*, by Rodriguez, the *Ascetic Directory*, by Scaramelli, the *Spiritual Combat*, by Scupoli, *The Knowledge and Love of our Lord*, by P. Saint-Jure, the *Spiritual Works* of R. P. Judde, the *Catechism of the Interior Life* by M. Olier, *The Christian Life and Virtues*, by Mgr. Gay, and many others, for it would be impossible to enumerate them all.

And among the *affective* works which unite doctrine and piety there is the incomparable masterpiece *The Imitation of Christ*, over which so many Christian generations have shed tears, and which Jean-Jacques Rousseau himself used as his bedside book; we have also the *Soliloquies* of S Augustine, the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* of S Alphonsus, the *Sufferings of our Lord*, by Thomas of Jesus, the *Elevations on the Mysteries*, by Bossuet, and many others, which would take us too long to enumerate, and which read in short portions are a wonderful food for our devotion, and a solace for all the wounds of the heart.[1]

II. After the choice of a good book, best adapted to our disposition and our needs, comes the method of reading it with benefit, which is no less important.

Firstly, it is necessary to apply oneself faithfully to reading during the prescribed time, and not change from it without serious reasons. Inconstancy, here as in other things, hinders the success of the effort.

It must not be read with curiosity, like a study of profane science, but in a religious spirit, in order to sanctify us, remembering those beautiful words of S Augustine, " When you pray, you speak to God; when you read, it is God who speaks to you."[2] Therefore, it is necessary to read with humility, as a disciple listens to the voice of his master who teaches him, and without the least attempt at criticising him. However, if it presents serious difficulties, or if it raises objections, it is not good to allow them to accumulate in our mind. The worry which would follow in order to understand the rest and to assimilate it, would paralyse our effort. It is wiser to consult our director or some competent master, in order that he may give all the explanations we require.

[1] See the *Indications pour une petite bibliothèque du jeune prêtre*, by M. Letourneau, at the end of his *Manuel du séminariste* (Gabalda, Paris).

[2] *Enarr. in Psal.*, lxxxv, n. 7, p. 191. Quando legis, Deus tibi loquitur; quando oras, Deo loqueris.

Finally, as the aim of spiritual reading is not only to enlighten us, but also to sanctify us by enlightening us, it is necessary to read rather slowly to allow complete assimilation, and make pauses from time to time for meditation and prayer. Thus we nourish our mind and heart at the same time.

" Nothing is more true," said the Ven. Louis of Blois, " than this maxim of the masters of the spiritual life, that it is very useful to pass from reading to prayer, and from prayer to reading. . . . These two sources being joined together, the good which flows from them is all the more abundant. And what hinders you from mingling prayer and reading together in such a way as to make one single occupation of it ? You have only to interrupt what you are reading from one moment to another, to make short aspirations to heaven, to sigh after God in acts of love. And how many treatises there are, how many books, from which can be drawn, at one time, matter for reading, prayer and meditation ! "

This advice is particularly valuable to invalids, wearied souls who are not capable of applying themselves for long to meditation, and who could easily supplement it by slow reading, interspersed with ejaculatory prayer.

As for the *duration* of the daily spiritual reading, half an hour would seem moderate and normal, but it is for the director to decide, according to the needs and the opportunities of each individual.

CHAPTER VI

Private Devotions

THIS is a very vast subject. In order to keep within the bounds of our plan, we will limit ourselves to indicating summarily the principal devotions, which are devotion to *the Church*, which is the mystical body of our Saviour, to *our Saviour himself*, to *the Blessed Virgin* and the *saints*, and finally, to the *souls in Purgatory*.

These are the fundamental devotions, and also the most ancient, for they were born with Christianity itself, and have developed with it through the ages of Faith.

ARTICLE I

Devotion to the Church

This devotion embraces the Universal Church, which is our soul's fatherland, and also that smaller homeland symbolised by the church of the village or town in which we were born.

In the Universal Church it is the Sovereign Pontiff, its head and chief, who should be the first object of our devotion. Upon devotion to the Pope Mgr. de Ségur[1] has written admirable and very substantial pages, which can be re-read always with profit.

It is not only profound respect and filial obedience that this "devotion" demands, but according to the etymology of the word, a complete "devotedness" both to the august person of the Pope, and to all the Catholic works of which he is the prime mover: the work of Peter's Pence, different works in connection with the Propagation of the Faith, the Divine Childhood, Foreign Missions, etc., works which include the entire universe, and assure its union with the Catholic Church.

After this vast native land of our souls, comes the smaller one which is a living cell within it, and of which the parish

[1] Mgr. de Ségur, *La devotion au pape.*

CHURCH is the centre. It is there, at its baptismal font, that we were born to the life of grace; it is there that we made our first Communion and received from the bishop's hands the sacrament of Confirmation; it is there, at the holy tribunal, that we have so often received pardon for our faults; it is there, at the Holy Table, that we are so frequently nourished with the bread of life; it is there, from the pulpit, that the word of God descends to enlighten and warm our hearts; it is there, in short, that we have seen such holy rites take place, heard such beautiful chants on the Feast Days, and passed the best and most heavenly hours of our earthly existence—till we return the last time in the funeral procession as to the ante-chamber of heaven.

The parish church is truly a home to us, better than the ordinary house; it is the house of God, and we must have a true devotion to it, by regularly attending all the parish offices, all the processions outside or inside; above all, we should interest ourselves in all the parish works, including the Catholic schools.

This devoted love for our parish church, however, does not exclude an attachment to CONFRATERNITIES and other pious associations: although distinct from the parish, they are also parochial, since they have at their head the presidency, at least of honour, of the parish priest, and are under his guidance a most powerful instrument for mutual edification, and for Christian life in the parish.

In belonging to them, in devoting ourselves to them whole-heartedly, we do good to others by our example, and we benefit ourselves, for charity to our brethren is from henceforth rewarded a hundredfold.

However, the Church is indeed the Mystical Body of our Lord, but it is to our Lord himself that our keenest devotion must tend.

ARTICLE II

Devotion to our Lord

These devotions are numerous and equally dear to the Christian heart. Above all, there is devotion to his *sorrowful Passion*, to the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, and to *the Blessed Sacrament*. They are all so well known to the pious faithful that, in spite of their importance, we can limit ourselves to a few words.

I. The PASSION of our Lord has been, since the beginning of Christianity, the object of the most universal and tender devotion, and the cult of the Holy Places which were the witnesses of it was a natural consequence. As soon as the Edict of Constantine allowed the Church to emerge from the Catacombs and show itself in the light of day, history shows us that the *Way of the Cross*, followed by our Lord going to Calvary, was perfectly well known and performed by numerous pilgrims.

"It would appear then," says Fr Thurston, "that only an extreme scepticism will question the fact that the spot where Constantine built his churches, and which Christians, like the Bordeaux pilgrims of A.D. 333, came from the ends of the earth to visit, were really the sites they claimed to be. On the one supremely important question of the identification of the Holy Sepulchre and Calvary, it may be said fearlessly that, despite the attempts of sundry English and American Protestants to find a Calvary of their own in another quarter, the evidence of archæology and excavation is altogether on the side of the old tradition. The narrative of St Silvia's Pilgrimage c. 380, discovered within the last few years, has also come to reinforce what we already knew from St Jerome, the Bordeaux pilgrim Eusebius, and others concerning the intense feeling of veneration which the residents of Jerusalem felt for the Holy Places (a very limited number) pointed out by local tradition."[1]

Now the WAY OF THE CROSS was a pilgrimage in miniature to the Holy Places; the early pilgrims, once returned home, were anxious to have them in facsimile, in order to treasure their remembrance, whilst the still more numerous faithful, deprived of this great pilgrimage, found in the *Stations* a precious outlet for their piety.

The number of the *Stations*, and their title, was at first rather varied, according as one took for the starting-place Pilate's house, or some other place mentioned in the Gospels, and as one divided the length of the sorrowful way into more or less arbitrary stages. It is only by slow degrees that the number of fourteen stations has prevailed in popular practice, and we find this number definitely fixed in the sixteenth century. But that is an accidental detail, and without importance, which leaves intact the substance of this fundamental and universal devotion of the Way of the

[1] *The Month*, July, 1900, vol. 96, p. 3.

Cross, which the Sovereign Pontiffs have been pleased to enrich with the greatest indulgences. Above all, it is on Good Friday, and on all the other Fridays of the year, that the pious faithful love to practise this devotion; but it is particularly useful in times of temptation and trial.

From this general devotion to the Passion of our Lord several particular devotions are derived. First, that to the SACRED WOUNDS of our Saviour. "Rest thyself in the Passion of Christ," recommends *The Imitation* (II, ch. i), "and dwell willingly in his sacred wounds. For if thou fly devoutly into the wounds and into the precious marks of the Lord Jesus, thou shalt feel great strengthening in tribulation, neither wilt thou much care for the slights of men, and wilt easily bear words of detraction."

First the wounds in the Hands and Side will be venerated, then the *lance* and the *nails*, instruments of these wounds. It was Innocent VI, of pious memory, who instituted this latter Feast. In the fifteenth century we meet with numerous confraternities under the patronage of the five wounds of Christ.

II. The devotion to the SACRED HEART OF JESUS, pierced by the lance, was a very natural consequence of the devotion to the five wounds. M. Pourrat[1] thinks that it originated at the end of the Middle Ages at the Cistercian monastery of Helfta, where S Gertrude used to recite this touching prayer: "Most loving Lord, by the merits of thy pierced Heart, pierce the heart of Gertrude with the arrows of thy love, so that nothing earthly may dwell therein, but that it may be filled with the strength of thy divinity." It is certain that at this time many images of the pierced Heart of Jesus were venerated, at least with a private cult. And this was probably a consequence of the revelations of the Sacred Heart to S Gertrude and to two other holy nuns of the same monastery: Mechtilde of Magdeburg (c. 1282) and Mechtilde of Hackeborn (c. 1298). However, S Bernard and S Bonaventure had already prepared the way for the Devotion to the Sacred Heart. In the seventeenth century S John Eudes made it still better known. But it was reserved for the modern apostle of the Sacred Heart, S Margaret Mary, to state precisely the object and the purpose

[1] *La Spiritualité Chrétienne*, bk. ii, ch. xv.

of this beautiful devotion, so well adapted to our present needs.[1]

The cult of the wounds of Christ and of his pierced Heart inspired further a devotion to the PRECIOUS BLOOD. From the fourteenth century we read of offices composed in its honour. The Precious Blood plays a very great part in the visions of the mystic saints. And we may say that it is they who have excited and directed all these popular devotions, so dear to the Christian heart.

III. From the Passion to the EUCHARIST is an easy transition, since the Eucharist was instituted to be a memorial of the Passion.

In the Middle Ages, above all after the condemnation of the heresy of Berengarius of Tours, and as a reaction against the heretical denial of the Real Presence, the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament spread under new forms, created by the desire to see better and to adore better the true Body of our Saviour : the great Elevation of the Host and of the chalice in holy mass, Expositions of the Sacred Host in transparent monstrances, and the feast of Corpus Christi.

From the twelfth century, at least in France, the Elevation which takes place at the end of the canon of the mass, but scarcely perceptible to the eyes of the faithful, was preceded by the *great Elevation* immediately following the Consecration, which by its prominence allows all the faithful to see the adorable Body. Instead of bowing the head, the congregation therefore regarded fixedly the Sacred Host elevated by the priest, or else inclined the head just before and afterwards, because a special grace was attached to the sight of the Body of Christ.[2]

But to see the divine Body only at the Elevation could not satisfy the piety of the faithful for long, and *Exposition* of the Blessed Sacrament was soon added, where one could behold it at leisure, in transparent *pyxes* of crystal. This use is well established from the fourteenth century,

[1] See P. Terrien, *La dévotion au Sacré-Cœur* (Lethielleux) ; P. Bainvel, *Devotion to the Sacred Heart* ; Anon., *Mois du Sacré-Cœur* (Poussielgue).

[2] Cf. *Revue du Clergé français*, June 1 and Oct. 15, 1908. S. Thomas (iii, Q. 80, a. 4, ad 1 et 4) and several other theologians were asked if a Christian in a state of mortal sin were permitted to raise his eyes to look upon the Sacred Host. Their reply was reassuring to the faithful.

at least in Germany. Benediction with the Monstrance then, as to-day, terminated these very popular *Expositions*, which S Charles firmly established in instituting the devotion of the Forty Hours.

Finally, the great solemnity of the *Feast of Corpus Christi*, with its splendid processions, crowned these pious devotions to the Blessed Sacrament. This Feast, inspired in a vision to the Prioress of the monastery of Mont-Cornillon, near Liège, Blessed Juliana of Rétinne, was celebrated as early as the year 1246, and soon spread to a great number of dioceses, till Urban IV, in 1264, extended it to the Universal Church. It is well known that this Pope commissioned S Thomas Aquinas to compose an office of the Blessed Sacrament, and that the holy Doctor acquitted himself of this task to perfection, uniting poetry with dogma and piety in some admirable hymns.

To-day all these devotions, created spontaneously from the very intense interior piety of the ages of faith, are approved and regulated by the highest authority of the Church, and should have a place in the practice of all good Christians.

ARTICLE III

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

The devotion to the Blessed Virgin arose from devotion to the mysteries of our Lord, especially to those of his birth and death, which are the two extremes of our Saviour's life. The Joyful Mysteries of the Nativity, with the crib at Bethlehem, the shepherds, the Star, and the three Kings, which so often appear in the stained glass windows of the Middle Ages, doubtless stirred the hearts of the early Christians ; but the scenes of the Passion, with Mary courageously accompanying her divine Son to the foot of the cross, moved still more deeply the universal piety of believers and even of unbelievers.

I. It is impossible to meditate upon the Passion of Jesus without thinking of the sorrows of his Mother and blending them almost in the same act of piety. To the commemoration of the Passion of Christ will correspond that of Our Lady's Compassion, also called the Seven Sorrows of

Our Lady, because the seven principal scenes of the Passion caused particular suffering to Mary. They have been compared to seven swords which pierced her maternal heart, and it is thus that the paintings of the Middle Ages loved to represent them. Sculpture, too, has not been lacking, and everybody knows, for example, the very celebrated *Pietà* by Michael Angelo in S Peter's, Rome, where the intense grief of the Mother before the inanimate Body of her divine Son lying on her knees, is expressed with a startling vividness.

To this feast of the Sorrows are added others drawn from the chief events in the life of Mary : her NATIVITY, PURIFICATION, ANNUNCIATION, ASSUMPTION, and finally her IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, a doctrine so ancient, that the University of Paris in the fourteenth century exacted from all the new doctors an oath to defend this glorious privilege of the Mother of God.

But these feasts, which are celebrated in the course of the liturgical year, could not satisfy the piety of the faithful towards the Queen of heaven and earth, without daily devotions. Amongst these we notice the *Rosary* and the *Angelus*, which are the most ancient ; the month of Mary, under its present form, dates only from the eighteenth century.[1]

II. THE ROSARY.—Here we can consider three distinct elements : 1st, the instrument with which the " Hail Mary," is most easily counted ; 2nd, the prayer itself, or the series of " Ave Marias " ; 3rd, the meditation on the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries of the Blessed Virgin, during the recitation of these prayers.

1st. The instrument, of varied form, but always composed of threaded beads, which we, to-day, call the ROSARY, is a popular object with all people, and perhaps with all religions where the faithful need to count the number of their prayers. The hermits and the Fathers of the desert often counted with small pebbles, when they were without a rosary. Therefore, on this first point, the rosary has nothing original nor peculiar to Christianity about it.

2nd. On the contrary, the *Ave Maria* in its first part[2]

[1] Cf. *Revue du Clergé français*, Jan. 1, 1902, p. 255.

[2] The second part (*benedicta tu* . . .) is the salutation of S Elisabeth to Mary ; the third, the holy name of *Jesus*, and the fourth (*Sancta Maria* . . .) have been added by the Church.

was brought straight from heaven by the Archangel Gabriel, sent to salute Mary at the moment of the mystery of the Incarnation, and has not ceased to be continually repeated by all Christian lips. But the number of 150 *Aves* which compose the entire Rosary, is an imitation of the 150 Psalms of the Psalter, which had to be recited every day by the monks. This devotion being too long and too difficult for the simple faithful to recite, it was thus replaced by the *Psalter of Our Lady*, which was within the powers of all.

The Rosary is, therefore, a Psalter in miniature, as the scapular is the habit of the monk in miniature, and as, too, the Little Hours of Our Lady are a monastic office in miniature. This desire to imitate the monks in their religious devotions comes from a very true and very deep sentiment, for in order to become perfect while living in the world, it is necessary to approach as nearly as possible the life of those who have left the world to lead a perfect life, for there is only one ideal of Christian perfection. The busiest people in the world can recite at least a third of the Psalter of Our Lady, or the actual Rosary, and the king S Louis said every evening the fifty *Aves* which compose it, bareheaded and on his knees, inclining himself many times.

3rd. The introduction into the recitation of the Rosary of meditation on the fifteen Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious *Mysteries*, with the resulting division into fifteen decades, dates from the fifteenth century, and was intended to enliven a repetition which in the long run might have become mechanical and monotonous. It introduced a new and very happy variety into this crown of roses with which the children of Mary adorned the head of their Mother. In this symbolical crown, the white roses represented the joyful mysteries, the red roses the sorrowful, and the golden roses the glorious mysteries.[1]

Thus has the Rosary become not only a simple prayer within the power of all, but still more, by the pious meditation which is a part of it, one of the most efficacious means of developing in our souls the frequent thought of God, and the love of Jesus and Mary.

[1] Does the Rosary derive its origin from S Dominic? Cf. *Revue du Clergé français*, Jan., 1902; and Mezard, O.P., *Etude sur les origines du Rosaire*, 1912.

Practised thus, the Rosary is no longer a wearying matter of routine : the mind may tire of it, but the heart never.

III. The Angelus.—The Church has the honouring of the Blessed Virgin so much at heart that, after having encouraged the faithful of all countries and of all Christian centuries to repeat the *Ave Maria* in the form of the Rosary, she suggested to them the devotion of the Angelus;[1] three times a day, at the sound of the bell, in the morning at daybreak, at midday, and in the evening after sunset, the angelic salutation is recited kneeling, reminding us, by the divine maternity, of the great mystery of the Incarnation.

Originated in the monasteries, this pious custom very quickly spread to the population grouped around the monasteries, and the great bell of the town, or of the principal belfry, while ringing at daybreak for the beginning of work, at midday for the dinner hour, and in the evening for the curfew, when the inns were closed and lights extinguished, struck at the same time the chimes of the *Ave*. In certain countries, as in Italy, the twenty-four hours of the day were counted from the *Ave*, and thus the *Ave* became the centre of human life.

Great indulgences have been attached to this pious practice ; and it was only on the 3rd April, 1884, that a pontifical decree suppressed the obligation of reciting the Angelus at the sound of the bell, and kneeling, when it was difficult to observe this rule. In relaxing thus an accidental detail of this popular devotion, the Church has shown how much she has the safeguarding of essential things at heart.

ARTICLE IV

Devotion to the Saints

After devotion to our Lord by the cult of *latria* reserved to God alone, and that to his divine Mother by the cult of *hyperdulia*, comes the cult of *dulia* to the other saints.[2]

[1] See the history of the Angelus in the *Revue du Clergé français*, June 1, 1902, p. 24 *et seq*.

[2] Etymology : *latria*, adoration ; *dulia*, respect and honour ; *hyperdulia*, superlative of respect.

I. First the HOLY ANGELS, and among them S Michael, the Prince of the heavenly Jerusalem, always faithful to his God, battling against Lucifer and the rebel angels and thrusting them into hell, in proclaiming the incomparable greatness of God by this word which has become his name: *Michael*?[1] Who is like God? *Quis ut Deus*? It is to him that the mission of conquering Antichrist is reserved, during the last days of the world. Also he is the special protector of France, who honours him as her patron. And we invoke him every day in the official prayers added to the mass by Leo XIII. It is under his banner that all, priests and faithful, must range themselves to fight the good fight.

He is our protector, and also our model, and shares this double function with all the holy angels of heaven. However, there is one to whose guardianship each one of us is specially confided, who is called our *angel guardian*. Several of the mystical saints, like the Venerable Mother Agnès de Langeac, have had the privilege of their guardian angel's sensible presence, and of conferring with him. He has our salvation most specially at heart, and we owe to him a special confidence and a daily prayer.

II. After the cult of the holy Angels, comes the cult of all the saints who, after having lived and fought like ourselves upon this land of exile, are triumphing to-day in glory.

They were our brothers and our fellow-soldiers here below, and on this account confidence in their heavenly protection should be firmly fixed in our hearts.

Among those of the Old Law, emerged the austere JOHN THE BAPTIST, the fore-runner, of whom our Lord himself declared that the world had never seen a greater born: *non surrexit major Joanne Baptista* (Matt. xi, 11).

Beside him, making the connecting link between the two Testaments, is S JOSEPH, whose office of foster-father and guardian to the divine Child is incomparable, after that of Mary. And his patriarchal figure in companionship with Jesus and Mary in the representation of the mysteries of the Nativity and of the flight into Egypt, so dear to the piety of the early Christians, could not fail to be noticed by all, contemplated and venerated by all. Nevertheless, he remained for long in the background. It was only in the Middle

[1] Apoc., xii, 7.

Ages that his cult began to take the place to which it had a right. S Bernard, the very zealous and pious apostle of Mary, was equally the promoter of her chaste spouse. He was the first to put the greatness of his vocation in relief, his fidelity in corresponding to it, and the confidence that we should have in his holy patronage.[1] Later, Jean Gerson in France, S Bernardine of Siena in Italy, and S Teresa[2] in Spain, succeeded in making popular the devotion to S Joseph, which in our days has reached its full development. But it is to the pious Chancellor Gerson that we owe the institution of the Feast of S Joseph. He addressed his request for it to the Council of Constance, which placed its labours under his powerful protection, with a view to obtaining an end to the great schism which was grieving the Church (1418).

In addition to S Joseph, we must mention S PETER, the prince of the apostles, and the APOSTLES themselves, who founded the Church of Christ by their labours, their holiness, their miracles, and by the shedding of their blood.

We should also have devotion to our HOLY PATRONS. There have always been among the saints protectors of cities, castles, and even the houses of citizens. And in every city all the confraternities and corporations had their patronal feast, celebrated with the greatest possible religious ceremony and secular rejoicing.

Finally, all the other saints of Paradise, a countless multitude, of all tribes and all nations, who filled all the days of the calendar, were honoured all together in the very popular and beautiful solemnity of ALL SAINTS.

Such are the particular devotions dear to all Christian hearts. We have only been able to enumerate very summarily the chief ones. And yet there is one more devotion which stirs even more deeply our faith and our emotion, about which we cannot omit to speak, before finishing this chapter. It is the cult of the dead, and the devotion to the souls in purgatory.

[1] S Bernard, *Super Missus est*, Homil., ii, 16.

[2] *Life*, ch. vi. S Teresa declares here that through S Joseph's intercession she obtained all the graces which she desired.

ARTICLE V

Devotion to the Souls in Purgatory

After the feast of All Saints, when we raised our eyes and our prayers to those myriads of blessed ones who fill the heavenly home with their glory, and of whom the heavens with their myriads of shining stars in the depths of the night are but a faint symbol—the Church makes us lower our eyes to the abyss of PURGATORY, that ante-chamber of heaven, where so many predestined souls complete their purification. And among these suffering ones we recognise the souls of our grandparents, perhaps a tenderly-loved father or mother, brother or sister, or our dearest friends. In visiting the cemeteries where their precious remains sleep, we hear them repeat these words of Job: "*Have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me.*"[1]

By virtue of the great dogma of our faith, called the COMMUNION OF SAINTS, we can pray and make expiation one for another. We can hasten the deliverance of these souls in a thousand ways, most of them very easy and within reach of our goodwill. All our good actions, even the most ordinary, can be profitable to them, if we offer them to God for that intention. But among these good actions some are more meritorious and efficacious than others. First, there are those which have an expiatory character: all our alms and mortifications, even the slightest mortifications of curiosity, taste, will, and other natural inclinations. Then prayers said with attention and piety, above all indulgenced prayers, as the Way of the Cross, the Rosary, the prayer "O good and sweet Jesus" after communion, etc., etc. It costs us so little to dip into this treasury of indulgences, a precious treasury composed of the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ and the saints, of which the Sovereign Pontiff has the principal dispensation.

Finally, it is above all by the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice of the mass, and Holy Communion, for the intention of the souls in purgatory, that we can relieve these poor souls, shorten the time of their sufferings, and hasten their entrance into Paradise.

[1] Miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me (Job xix, 21).

Every good Christian, if he has the faith, cannot fail to embrace ardently a devotion so consoling and so useful to our beloved dead, penetrated by this truth of Sacred Scripture, " It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."[1]

[1] Sancta et salubris est cogitatio pro defunctis exorare, ut a peccatis solvantur (2 Mach. xii, 46).

CHAPTER VII

The Rule of Life

THE mere enumeration of the spiritual exercises which we have just described—mental prayer, examination of conscience, frequent confession and communion, holy mass, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading, the manifold particular devotions to the Church, our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the saints and the souls in purgatory—might make us fear that the Christian life is both complicated and tiring. But that is only an apparent and a superficial view.

For all exercise, as we have already remarked, whether mental or physical, even military exercise, appears very complicated if all the movements which compose it are analysed in a theoretical and detailed way. But all becomes simple with a little practice: thousands of acts resolve themselves into one single act, which is repeated with surprising facility, and often automatically, so much so that automatic routine may become a real danger.

I. The *important thing* is to know how to arrange everything in an orderly way and without confusion, in the narrow limits of the day, by a wise rule which foresees everything, as far as possible, and which orders the course and the length of our actions, at least the chief ones.

Thus nothing is forgotten, and all follows with order and method in a truly complete and well-filled day. It is the happiest thing one can possibly wish a good Christian, to be able, as the Psalmist says, to present himself before his Sovereign Judge with his days complete, and a life well filled: *dies pleni invenientur in eis* (Ps. lxxi, 10).

A Christian who lives without rule, hesitates every moment as to what he must do, and by these hesitations wastes time; he lives at the inclination of caprice and changing whim, which drag him as if into a whirlwind; it is no longer he who governs himself, he is ruled and borne along. No order exists in the employment of his time, no continued and constant work; his devotions are omitted,

shortened, or badly done; his life is sometimes idle as if he had nothing to do, sometimes hurried with restless activity, which in order to make up for lost time disturbs everything, does nothing well, and uselessly consumes his strength and health.

On the contrary, he who is governed by a rule never hesitates, is always self-possessed, and does well what he attempts without wasting his strength. The rule multiplies time by putting order into it and being careful of the minutes; and this is the secret which explains how certain men have managed, often during a short life, to compose so many books, or perform so many prodigious works, the very number of which astonishes us.

The Christian, to live a full life, has need of wise regulations in arranging his days, his weeks, his months, his whole life; the rule unites work and relaxation, the life of piety, and the duties of his calling or profession in harmonious proportion.

II. Manner of Observance.—It is not sufficient to have a good rule of life; it must, in addition, be well observed. And in order to be faithful to it, it must first be *loved*. Now we shall love it if we understand its value, if we know how to admire the good order it puts into our days and into our whole life.

If we develop in our hearts this sincere esteem and love for the rule which we have freely imposed on ourselves, we shall obey it with *courage*, in the smallest as in the more important things, not fearing to do violence at times to ourselves in bending our wills to it.

As a consequence we shall obey it with *joy*, seeing the abundant fruit which it procures us, both in the result of our daily labour, and in the sanctification of our souls, which this perpetual immolation of our own will and caprice to God's good pleasure and his love, will continually augment.

Our obedience to its regulations will remain always *reasonable*, according to the words of S Paul: *rationabile obsequium vestrum* (Rom. xii, 1); and we need not fear to derogate from it, each time that charity to our brethren or the duties of our state require it. The rule, in fact, is a powerful help to our liberty, and by no means a prison to stifle it. Thus understood, it is the true liberty of the children of God, always disciplined by reason and faith.

CHAPTER VIII

Spiritual Direction

THE general impression which results from the study we have just made of so many spiritual exercises is our inability to acquit ourselves well of them, without the help of the enlightened counsels of an experienced master and a devoted friend, who may guide us. Now this master, this friend, is the spiritual director of whom it remains for us to speak.

I. General Notions.—The director and the confessor are often, and even usually, the same person; however, the one is not the other, and their offices are different. The confessor hears the avowal of committed faults, judges the dispositions of the penitent, and gives or refuses absolution. The director must know not only the faults of his subject, but even his habits, his aptitudes, his likes and dislikes, and also his temptations, in order to counsel him and direct him in the ways of Christian perfection, pointing out the stumbling-blocks to him, correcting his digressions, sustaining, and, if need be, stimulating his goodwill. As we see, direction embraces all the objects of confession, and goes much further. It is the natural complement of it.

Like the sacrament of Penance, direction exacts the *most absolute secrecy* on the part of the recipient of these intimate confidences. From this point of view there is little distinction to make between the director and the confessor, either during the life or after the death of the penitent. However, after his death, and upon the judicial summing up of the ecclesiastical tribunals for the canonisation of saints, the director can bear witness to the virtues and the saintliness of his former penitents. This is the opinion of Benedict XIV, and the constant practice of the Church.

Except in this unique case—where we must pre-suppose the consent of the person concerned—the most absolute secrecy is enforced, and S Teresa had reason many times to complain of the indiscretions committed in good faith

by certain imprudent directors who did not keep sufficiently secret the favours she received from God.[1]

II. Necessity of Direction.—It is proved first by common sense. "No one can be both judge and plaintiff in his own case," says the wisdom of nations; we are full of illusions about ourselves, and the assistance of others is indispensable to us, that we may know ourselves.

It is also the *universal practice of the saints*, according to the just remark of S Vincent Ferrer: "*Hanc viam tenuere omnes sancti.*"[2] Before setting forth on his journey, the young Tobias chose a guide; Moses before acting took counsel of the ancients; Paul is sent to Ananias by Jesus Christ, who might himself have instructed him but who prefers to appoint a wise director.

S Chantal was directed by S Francis de Sales; S Teresa by S John of the Cross; S Catherine of Siena by the Blessed Raymond of Capua; S Paul by S Jerome, etc., etc.

It seems one is scarcely able to quote any exceptions to this general rule of Providence. We may quote, for example, John the Baptist, S Paul the Hermit, Mary of Egypt—but in each of these cases God himself, by the interior inspiration of his Holy Spirit, enlightened and miraculously directed these privileged souls. We can even suppose, with S Vincent Ferrer,[3] that God acts likewise, in his mercy, with regard to all souls who, with a humble and fervent heart, have sought, without being able to find, the director they needed. But, yet again, that is a very rare exception to the general rule, a miracle which we cannot count upon.

Also, all the saints are unanimous in proclaiming its necessity: "No one is able to guide himself," says S Basil;[4] "He who directs himself submits himself to a fool," says S Bernard;[5] and S Augustine, "As a blind man without a leader, the man without a director can only with

[1] *Life*, ch. xxiii.

[2] S Vincent F., *De vita spirituali.*

[3] Deficientibus eis et non inventis qui foras instruerunt, tunc pietas divina per se supplet quod exterius minime reperitur; si tamen corde humili et ferventi ad Deum accedunt (S Vincent F., *De vita spirit.*, cap. iv.)

[4] S Basil, *Orat. de Felic.*

[5] Qui se sibi magistrum constituit, stulto se discipulum subdit (S Bernard, *Ep.*, lxxxii).

difficulty follow the right path";[1] The pious Gerson is no less affirmative: "The man who is arrogant enough to constitute himself his own guide," he says, "has no need of a demon to tempt him, he is himself his own demon."[2] Finally, the lovable S Francis de Sales says to Philothea, "Will you knowingly progress in devotion? Seek some good man to guide and conduct you. This is the best of all advice."[3] It is useless to accumulate more testimony and more examples in order to confirm a truth of ordinary common sense. However, it will not be superfluous to recall the formal condemnation by Holy Church of the error of Molinos.

This false mystic denied the necessity of spiritual direction, and taunted it with being a new doctrine, under the pretext that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who dwells in our souls suffices.

We have already shown that the presence of the Holy Spirit in every soul in a state of sanctifying grace does not admit of this conclusion. God does not dispense us from having recourse to human means for instruction; he only raises and inflames our efforts, and we need to receive instruction from experienced masters for all the sciences and arts, not excepting knowledge of the faith, for faith comes to us by teaching: *fides ex auditu*; not excepting further the art of governing one's life, which is the supreme art, the most difficult of all, *ars artium*.[4] It would be a perpetual miracle if God dispensed us from it, and although he may have worked this wonder in the lives of some saints, as we have seen, it is not for us to count upon this miracle. Molinos himself has shown by his lamentable example how wrong he was to count on it.[5]

[1] Sicut cæcus sine ductore, sic homo sine doctore rectam viam vix graditur (S Augustine, *Sermo* 112 *de Temp.*).

[2] Quod homo arrogans et seipsum ducens sui constituens, non indiget dæmone tentante, qui factus est sibi dæmon (Gerson, *De Distinct. ver. revel., sign.* 2).

[3] *Introd. to The Devout Life*, pt. I, ch. iv.

[4] Ars artium, regimen animarum (S Gregory the Great, *Pastor.*, l. I, ch. i).

[5] See the principal propositions of this false mystic, condemned in 1623 by the Spanish Inquisition, and by Innocent XI in 1687: "Quod sequi quisque debet Spiritus sancti nutum et inspirationem internam, ad aliquid faciendum, aut contra omittendum, et non aliter" (*Prop.* ii). "Risu digna est quædam doctrina nova in Ecclesia Dei, animam, ad interna quæ attinet, gubernari debere per Episcopum . . . aut alium ab ipso datum directorem" (*Prop.* lxvi). (Cf. Schram, *Théolog. myst.*, § 339, sch.).

III. The Choice of a Director.—There is nothing more difficult than this choice, because, among all the confessors approved by the bishop, a perfect director is a *rara avis*.

"Choose one in a thousand," said S John of the Cross, and S Francis de Sales added, "And I tell you, in ten thousand, for there are fewer than one could say who are capable of this office."[1]

We should find S Teresa using expressions no less strong to depict the difficulties of such a choice, though it is true that these three saints had in view direction in the heights of mystical contemplation. In its own sphere, the difficulty remains the same for direction in the ordinary ways of asceticism, which also supposes a fairly complete knowledge of mysticism—if only so as not to confuse the two ways, active and passive, as well as their widely different methods. It is true also that the instruction of the clergy to-day, above all since the foundation of seminaries, is incomparably better than of old. It is not, however, complete enough upon these delicate matters of ascetic and mystical theology, and even should it be so, the practical difficulties of applying scientific theories would still remain formidable. The difficulty, then, of choosing a director exists still, and will always exist.

The *qualities* of a good director of souls, according to S Teresa, S John of the Cross, S Francis de Sales, and the most celebrated writers on this great art, in spite of the divergences of detail in their expression, can at root be summed up in three principles: *knowledge*, *piety* and *prudence*. Without competent knowledge there is no possible security in doctrinal decisions, nor even in the whole matter of directing each soul in its own way. If a director has no piety there will be no apostolic zeal; nor will it be possible to communicate to a penitent piety which he himself does not possess. The providential channel of grace being obstructed, its waters will no longer flow to other souls. Finally, without prudence, the penitent will find no sense of proportion in his counsel, no point in his advice or rebuke, no security in his direction.

Of these three qualities necessary in a good director which is the first and most indispensable? Let us have no doubt: *it is knowledge*. S Teresa affirms it with all the deep conviction of the sufferings which the "half-learned"

[1] *Introd. to The Devout Life*, pt. I, ch. iv.

caused her. "In the name of our Lord I ask whoever may be the Superior," she writes, "to endeavour always to obtain from the bishop, or from the provincial, for herself and her daughters, the liberty to speak of interior things with learned people, even if their own confessors are good and virtuous. For God keep them from guiding themselves in all things by the advice of an ignorant confessor, however spiritual he may appear to be, and may be in fact! Knowledge is extremely useful, in giving enlightenment on all subjects, and it is not impossible to meet people who may be both learned and spiritual."[1]

The competent knowledge which S Teresa demands, and which is surely required for a good director, is not only *theoretical* knowledge of dogmatic and moral theology, which consists in knowing how to solve ordinary and common cases, and how to suspend judgement in others, until counselled by more capable people; it consists also in *practical* knowledge, or the experience of souls, which teaches one to know what is suitable to each temperament and to the different states of life, whether to neophytes who are beginning, or to those who are progressing, or to the more perfect; it teaches us, in fact, the different ways in which souls are drawn from God, and the methods of enlightening, converting, and leading them back to God, and uniting them perfectly to him.

All knowledge needs the enlightenment of experience to be fully understood and applied with the modification which the government of souls requires. This exact calculation, and application of theory, is the fruit of experience. Only actual experience, united with solid doctrine, can constitute complete wisdom. And if all directors cannot possess such knowledge in an eminent degree, it is at least to be hoped that the numbers of those who do eminently possess it may become more and more considerable.

IV. Sympathy and Frankness.—The qualities required for a good director are not, however, sufficient without sympathy and frankness on the penitent's part. We can only speak here of *supernatural* sympathy, founded on the desire to approach God, and the presentiment that a particular priest is the man of God who is best fitted to lead

[1] *Way of Perfection*, ch. v.

us to him, by making us understand and taste divine things.

A purely natural sympathy, inspired by the gifts of nature only, physical qualities, pleasantness of mind, and the like, is a deceptive attraction which might estrange us from God, instead of drawing us nearer to him.

However, a director, whom we esteem and trust, if he does not inspire sympathy, will never induce that complete candour on the part of his penitent which is indispensable to fruitful direction. This frankness will be easy and even pleasant with a sympathetic director, who exercises the mysterious attraction of grace on us.

The choice of a wise director should be perfectly free, and never imposed upon one, since sympathy must be spontaneous. Such is indeed the spirit and will of the Church. It is necessary to place pastors at the head of parishes, and chaplains at the service of communities or colleges. It is impossible to do without this providential order in guiding souls; but the Church never blames the faithful who seek confessors or directors outside their own parishes. And in cloistered communities, "extraordinary" confessors are appointed, who officiate several times during the year, which assures as much freedom as possible to every soul.

Also, besides one's ordinary confessor, access to whom is often more convenient, there is nothing to prevent one having a more distant director, to whom one can go from time to time to make a complete unburdening of the soul, to ask advice in more difficult cases, and to enjoy the advantages of complete candour with him.

At the same time this liberty must not degenerate into an abuse, and there is nothing more pernicious to souls than the inconstancy and vagrancy of certain devout people, incapable of settling down, who by their incomplete confessions disconcert all their directors or deceive them, in order to bring them to their own point of view and make them approve their secret wishes.

V. Two Methods of Direction and spirituality. One of the causes which provoke this present-day vacillation in the penitent's sympathies is the double tendency noticeable amongst directors in their methods of spirituality. The question is so grave that we cannot finish this subject without mentioning it, reserving a fuller treatment to our discussion on "quietism."

It is necessary that the reader should know that there are in France and elsewhere, two methods of spirituality, one tending to be active, militant, and energetic because it develops the virile energy of the soul; the other tending towards passivity, and leaving all to God, with the risk of enervating, relaxing the springs of their activity. This second method wishes to "simplify" the interior life and render it easy and attractive. It consists in speaking only of the love of God, and resignation to his guidance, leaving the acquisition of solid virtues in the background, except divine charity. Thus, by favouring spiritual sloth, it cannot fail to please numerous souls who dislike the least effort.

The first method, on the contrary, takes sinful man, such as he is, with his threefold concupiscence, and insists on the hard battle he must wage in order to triumph over it. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," our Lord has said, "and the violent bear it away."[1]

That is why he calls all men without exception to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him.[2] And S Paul, who learned and practised the lesson, cries out, "I fill up that which is wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh. . . ."[3] And far from being afraid, he adds, "I can do all in him who strengtheneth me."

Compare this language of Christ and S Paul with that of the doctors of the new school which leaves the soul passive in God's hands. "What must I do to correspond to God's will? Nothing. God does all, I have but to give myself up, resign myself, and leave the rest."[4] "Let Jesus Christ love God in us and through us, that is the only way."[5] "It is more perfect, more sweet, more fitting, to yield oneself to Jesus."[6] "How foolish I am! Since God reserves for himself my guidance, it is senseless of me to wish to act by myself; it is throwing myself out of his arms. . . . What do I myself know of the true needs of my soul and of their remedies? When I pretend to act. . . .

[1] Regnum Dei vim patitur et violenti rapiunt illud (Matt. xi, 12).

[2] Qui vult venire post me abneget semetipsum, tollat crucem suam et sequatur me (Matt. xvi, 24; Mark viii, 34).

[3] Adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi in carne mea (Coloss. i, 24).

[4] *La Vie intérieure simplifiée*, 1894, pp. 180, 305, etc.

[5] *La Voie*, p. 9.

[6] *L'intimité avec Jesus*, p. 42.

I encourage imprudence. . . . True piety is more simple; let God do as it pleases him."[1]

This distrust of all human action, as if it were essentially bad, has as a consequence, at least logically, the diminution and perhaps the suppression of all personal effort; it amounts to spiritual sloth. The spiritual exercises, so strongly urged by the saints and by Catholic tradition, are openly disdained or "simplified" in a strange way. No more discursive meditation ending in practical resolutions for the present day; these resolutions are declared to be useless or even harmful. At most a vague resolution to "follow God," to follow his movements. No more examination of conscience upon one's thoughts, words, actions, or omissions, but simply upon the dispositions of the heart to "follow God." No more penitential exercises, for "to love God is better than to bewail one's sins," and "the best way of purifying oneself is to love." Still more, the "regularity" of those exercises of piety which survive such a method of "simplification" has no longer any sense; since it is necessary to await a "motion from God" before acting, we cannot choose our times in advance of him.

These exaggerations of the new method would ruin from beginning to end all that we have written according to the traditional teaching of the Church upon spiritual exercises, whose manifest general character is to be a labour, a struggle, a personal effort of co-operation with grace, as its very name of *exercise*, or *asceticism* (ἀσκεῖν) indicates; these perilous exaggerations flow from the perpetual confusion between the ascetic and mystical ways. Mystical states are passive at certain times, we do not deny, whilst the ascetic states are essentially active; and the error consists in wishing to extend to all Christian life the principles which only belong to the mystic ways—that is to say, to the "rare and sublime guidance of God," of which Bossuet speaks. Through this confusion and deception, the demon, who is "the ape of God," would push souls to ape mysticism in order to bring discredit upon it by practising "quietism," the study of which we carry further in our volume upon *Mystical Theology*.

Here it is sufficient that we put the reader on his guard against these dangerous innovations.

[1] *La Vie intérieure simplifiée*, p. 212.

PART V

PART V

The Means Proper to the Three Stages of Perfection

A TREATISE on ascetic theology usually limits itself to a statement of the general principles leading to perfection, without discussing the ART OF DIRECTING SOULS, which applies these general principles to each soul in particular, according to its nature and temperament, its progress in perfection, and also according to its special vocation, e.g. the priesthood, the religious state, or life in the world.

The diagnosis and treatment of souls is not a science, but an art—the great art of directing consciences—*ars artium regimen animarum*—which can be learnt to a certain degree by studying special treatises, but which practice alone can render complete.[1]

Without wishing to encroach upon this *reserved domain*, we believe that it will be useful and even necessary to let our readers glance at these new horizons, and to prepare them from the beginning, if they are one day to have the charge of souls. For even if they do not hope later to direct others, these remarks may help them at any rate to direct themselves, so that our labour will not have been in vain.

They already know what theologians mean by the three ways, *purgative*, *illuminative*, and *unitive*. These are the three stages which the soul usually goes through, in passing from a state of sin to the highest perfection. In fact, in every art there is the novice, the proficient, and the perfect. So in everything as it develops, there is the beginning, the middle, and the end.[2]

These stages are not divided by barriers and partitions, and a specific counsel for one of these states may be more or less suitable on other motives, for the other two. Thus,

[1] *Diagnostic et traitement des âmes*, by the author of *Secret des communions ferventes*, 1 vol. in-12 (Dewet, 1915, Brussels).

[2] These three degrees can be distinguished in the ascetic and mystic ways. We have seen the same distinction in the development of each of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

mortification, which is recommended primarily to beginners who need purifying, must not be neglected by the proficient, nor even by the perfect, but there are special reasons for emphasising this virtue at the outset of the soul's purification.

In the same way, if the virtue of pure love is insisted upon in the unitive way, it is not because it is to be excluded in the other two states, but because it must be the dominant virtue in the perfect state. In a word, all these moral forces, the state of soul, character, and temperament are complex and they so mingle and blend with each other that their *dominant note* alone can distinguish and mark them.

Taking into account these reservations, the distinction of the three states has become classic, and the Church has formally sanctioned it, as we have seen, in the condemnation of the errors of Molinos.

We are, therefore, going to glance in turn at the nature of these three stages, the PURGATIVE, the ILLUMINATIVE, and the UNITIVE, showing the needs of each, and the specific counsels which suit them. We shall see, in fact, that in each of them the soul has to offer a different kind of *prayer*, and to practise different *virtues*, because it will meet in each way different *obstacles*.

There is, however, one counsel common to all, and that is to nourish in the heart the *holy desire* for a perfect life. We might call this desire the *general means* towards perfection, but we may also consider it as the *preliminary condition* of all spiritual progress, and the preparation for the general or particular means we have just considered.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

The Desire for Perfection

WHETHER you have to deal with a sinner who wishes to be converted—being drawn by the grace of God—or with a soul who is already in the path of perfection, or even with one who has made great progress and soars in the heights of pure love, the FIRST COUNSEL to give is to make him wish to become better, and to inflame his heart with a desire for still greater perfection. It is clear that without this desire, the soul will not advance; an irresolute will, which now wishes a thing and now does not, will remain stationary, making no progress; it will only arrive at a miserable mediocrity, for "*he who does not advance, goes back,*" according to the profound saying of our holy Fathers,[1] which is verified a thousand times in daily experience; you will soon notice a lessening of first fervour, an increasing coldness, and then a positive distaste, which will perhaps be the beginning of a grave fall.

To safeguard this, it is necessary to urge all those who aspire to a better life *to reflect*, and to *pray* with all their heart.

I. REFLECTION is indispensable, for the will is blind by itself, and cannot wish or desire that which it does not know; *ignoti nulla cupido.* Reflection will show it the ugliness and ingratitude of sin, the beauty and happiness of virtue, and the deceitfulness of the riches of this world, which are incapable of satisfying a noble and generous nature: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,"[2] cried Solomon, as he pondered on the emptiness of his heart after he had tasted the transitory glory of the earth. "All is vanity, except to love God, and to serve him alone," others cry, who, with the author of the *Imitation*, have learnt by experience.[3] And the great apostle S Paul, after his con-

[1] Non progredi, regredi est . . . qui non proficit, deficit . . . Ubi incipis nolle esse melior, ibi desinis esse bonus (S Bernard, Serm. ii in *Purific.*).

[2] Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vanitas (Eccli. i, 2).

[3] Omnia vanitas, præter amare Deum, et illi soli servire (*Imit.*, i, 3).

version, proclaims the same truth: "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord."[1]

For what, in fact, do all other gains amount to? Some degrade a man and lower him to the level of animals, ruining his strength and health, and bringing him to premature old age, or an early death. Others, not so evil, are nevertheless chains which fasten him to the earth and deprive him of the liberty of the children of God.

At our death, what will be the good of our wealth, our power, honours and dignities, or a world-wide reputation, if we have forgotten the care of our soul? *Quid prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?* (Matt. xvi, 26).

There is, then, but one thing that is indeed useful and necessary, *unum est necessarium*; this was the word of our Lord to Martha encumbered with trivial cares. This is also the chastening thought which must come to every true and faithful soul after a little serious reflection or a day of solitary retreat. But if this thought is to be efficacious, and to have the virtue of converting our lives, a second condition is necessary—the help of the grace of God.

II. It is by PRAYER that we shall obtain this. The mind may be convinced, while the will remains obstinate and unsubdued. Clouds of passion and evil emotion can rise from the depths of our being, and blind our vision. A change of will is above all the work of grace. Grace alone can touch and soften our hard hearts, and kindle in them the sacred fire of divine love. When once a soul has tasted the truth and the sweetness and beauty of this call: *Serve God! Serve God alone!* life returns in its fulness, not in anguish and tears of regret, but with tears of joy and fervour.

"My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God," sang David: *Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum* (Ps. lxxxiii, 3). "I rejoiced at the things that were said unto me, we shall go into the house of the Lord": *Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi, in domo Domini ibimus* (Ps. cxxi, 1). "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God": *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum* (Ps. xli, 1). And the great king was never tired of repeating in holy rapture, "My soul hath desired to long for thy justifica-

[1] Omnia . . . arbitror ut stercora, ut Christum lucrifaciam (Philip. iii, 8).

tions": *Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificationes tuas* (Ps. cxviii, 20).

Fired with this desire, the soul needs moderation rather than stimulus in its march towards the longed-for goal, for it would leap along the way of perfection, "like sparks among the reeds." *Justi . . . . tanquam scintillæ in arundineto discurrent* (Wisdom iii, 7.)

III. These fervent desires should mark not only the newly-converted and the beginner, BUT ALL THE FAITHFUL, at whatever stage of the journey they may be, according to the word of S John: "He that is just, let him be justified still, and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still": *Qui justus est justificetur adhuc et sanctus sanctificetur adhuc* (Apoc. xxii, 11). And S Paul gives us an example. Even after his vision of the third heaven, and his heroic works as apostle, he confesses: "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark": *Fratres, ego me non arbitror comprehendisse. Unum autem: quæ quidem retro sunt obliviscens, ad ea vero quæ sunt priora extendens, meipsum ad destinatum persequor* (Philip. iii, 13).

So, without exception, at whatever age of life we may be, or whatever our virtue, we must still press forward, we must be now and always *men of holy desires*. It was this quality which pleased God in the prophet Daniel, and which brought to him the visit of the archangel Gabriel: *quia vir desideriorum es* (Dan. ix, 23). And it is this which will obtain for us the grace of progress, and perseverance in the way of safety.

It is recounted that S Thomas, when asked by his friends what were the conditions necessary to become a saint, answered, "There are three: firstly, you must wish it: secondly, you must still wish it, and thirdly, you must continue wishing it." To reach that end, the first and last condition is to long for it with all our heart, with the most passionate desire, ardently and constantly. We should resolutely seize all the possible means revealed to us, for as the proverb says: "*Where there's a will there's a way.*" But this is only a preliminary condition to all that we shall have to say about the successive stages to be passed through.

CHAPTER I

The Purgative Way

THIS name, now classical, describes most aptly the state of the soul when it begins to separate itself from sin, and is as yet only in the first stage of its progress. Its greatest need is to be purified and to root out every trace of the evil it so deeply deplores.

We are going to sketch the form of *prayer* which it most needs, and the *virtue* or group of virtues it should chiefly exercise, also the *obstacles* it is most likely to encounter in its first steps towards the ideal Christian life.

ARTICLE I

The Prayer employed in this Way

I. First of all, Prayer. As we have already explained, this is of prime importance in all spiritual exercises, the source from which all the others spring, for it pertains to the intelligence, which ought to guide and control the impulses of heart and will.

The form of prayer most suitable to a beginner is the easiest, i.e. *discursive meditation* in the form of a slow meditative reading from some holy book adapted to the state of his soul, and especially from a book of clear and short meditations, like those of Louis of Granada, P. du Pont, M. Hamon curé of S Sulpice, Canon Beaudenom, and many others.

But a simple reading of the book is not enough. The person praying should make frequent pauses, as long as possible, so as to exercise reflexion, and be influenced by the reading, so that in time, his soul being thus nourished and fed, he may be able to meditate alone without the aid of any book. The book will give him, on the preceding evening, the subject of prayer for the following morning; he will have recourse to it from time to time, if his memory needs help, but as little as possible.

The *time* of day for this exercise is a matter of importance, and he should choose that moment when he feels in the best mood for meditation —probably after rising in the morning when all is quiet around him.

Then again the *choice of the subject of meditation* is of the highest importance and should be suited to the need of purification which the soul feels as it turns towards God. He should choose the great and searching truths of our holy religion, and meditate upon the last things—death, judgement, hell, an eternity of grief, the happiness of the elect, the hideousness and cruelty of sin, the wonderful disproportion between time and eternity, the necessity of salvation and of giving up all else to it, and so on.

It is essential that all these fundamental truths should be thoroughly understood from the outset of conversion, that they should penetrate deeply into the mind and heart, to be henceforward unshakable convictions, the guide and mainspring of our entire life.

Amongst all the great truths, it is natural to dwell most constantly upon that which makes the deepest impression on the soul, chiefly death and eternity. And we may be sure that the mind will return to this with profit. How many sinners owe to this thought of death their conversion and perseverance in the right path! *Memorare novissima tua et in æternum non peccabis* (Eccli. vii, 40).

ARTICLE II

Mortification

Mortification is the special VIRTUE to practice in this way. Meditation ought always to end by applying it to oneself as a practical conclusion, for knowledge, which is purely speculative and which leads to no practical progress, is barren and useless ; it will end then in the determination to acquire some particular virtue, or fight against some fault.

The battle against self is about to begin, but as the aim of the purgative way is to purify the soul, the person must reform what is deformed—*deformata reformare* ; this should be his chief thought.

There are, surely, many things to be reformed in the soul of the beginner. He must examine himself on the seven

deadly sins, and confess his wrongdoing on many points. The work of reformation is sometimes so great that he is often discouraged; therefore, too much must not be undertaken at the outset, but an attack made on the more serious faults. He must, therefore, consider what is his *dominant defect.*

A defect is not always a sin, but the tendency to commit sin arising from our temperament, or the strength of our habits.

We should begin by reforming the most conspicuous fault, the one which leads to others, and has most need of reformation—that, as we say, which is the *chief defect.* To fight against it, we must not only resist it, but we must practise the opposite virtue, just as gardeners, wishing to straighten a sapling which has grown awry, bend it firmly in the opposite direction, until it has assumed its right position. The specific virtue therefore of the purgative way will be *penance* or *mortification,* not as a general thing without any precise end, but keeping in mind expressly the particular defect to be corrected, and the contrary virtue to be acquired. Towards this goal every effort should be directed.

Thus, for example, in a passionate temperament, where pride and anger are uppermost, these grave defects should be corrected by practising the virtues of calmness, self-control, patience and humility.

The penance and mortification of the novice will thus be directed and guided by endeavouring to attain this end. He must be on his guard at all times and places in resisting his pride and anger, and must do penance in the various ways suggested to him by the Spirit of God. However, our mortification must not be restricted to one single point, but should be *spread* and extended progressively to all our faculties which have sinned, or are capable of leading us into sin. It may be our outer senses which communicate with the world, or our inward senses of imagination and memory, where dangerous images should be replaced by those which raise the mind to God; it may be our sensual appetites, or our mind which must be cleansed from ignorance, unhealthy curiosity or an undue love for our own opinion; it may be the stubborn tendency of the will, which must be softened into obedience or strengthened into love of duty and the holy will of God.

This work of mortification, progressive and all-embracing, is the best safeguard for the future, and expiation for the past.

ARTICLE III

Obstacles

The particular *obstacles* of beginners are numerous—we will point out three:

I. The first, against which a director ought at the earliest moment to warn his penitent, is *presumption* or confidence in himself. Precisely because he is filled with fervour and kindled with a holy desire for conversion, he will think himself able to rely upon his own strength and power.

Like the apostle S Peter before his conversion, he will believe that he is stronger and more generous than others, and, like him, he will be tempted to say: "Though others forsake thee, yet will I never forsake thee" (Matt. xxvi, 35). And we know how soon this impulsive boldness was contradicted and punished by his triple denial. How many relapses into sin are the just punishment for such presumption!

"Because thou sayest: I am rich and made wealthy, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see": *Dicis quod dives sum et locupletatus, et nullius egeo ; et nescis quia tu es miser, et miserabilis, et pauper, et cæcus, et nudus. Collyrio inunge oculos tuos, ut videas* (Apoc. iii, 17, 18).

Presumption produces blindness, which gives us too great an opinion of ourselves, so that we confide in our own strength, and forget that we have need of God and his grace at all times and in all places. It is a direct contradiction of the word of Jesus Christ: "without me you can do nothing": *Sine me nihil potestis facere* (John xv, 5). It is a real impiety: *Qui confidit in cogitationibus suis, impie agit* (Prov. xii, 2). It is even madness: *Qui confidit in corde suo, stultus est* (*ibid*, xxviii, 6). Also the presumptuous man is cursed of God: *Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine* (Jer. xvii, 5).

If conversion is to be lasting, it is of the highest im-

portance to warn a soul from the beginning against falling into this error, which renders all efforts abortive, and closes up every channel of grace which confidence in God and prayer alone can keep open.

We must pray, then, for perseverance in the path of conversion, and for the completion of a work well begun; this is the first and most important duty of the penitent, and of the director who has charge of his soul, who should himself be able to supply what is wanting in the fervour of his penitent's prayer, and in his voluntary mortifications. Like our Lord, he should know how to pray and consecrate himself for others: *Pro eis sanctifico meipsum* (Jo. xvii, 19).

II. After presumption, the second stumbling block of the beginner is the opposite fault—DISCOURAGEMENT. Resolutions are delightful and easy to make, but keeping them is a more difficult task, which sometimes becomes painful and repellent.

As soon as the first difficulties appear, our alluring theories lose their charm and all our ardour becomes chilled. There is not, as yet, any regret for the task we have entered upon, and certainly no slipping backwards, but there is a hint of disturbance, a vague anxiety, a black cloud which passes over the horizon and darkens the joy and peace of our soul. Here is an excellent opportunity which the devil will seize to renew his former attacks, and perhaps for a while he will make us lose our balance by a sudden unexpected falling away, which we regret immediately, but which saddens us, annoys us, and brings discouragement.

Let us watch carefully, lest we fall into this obvious snare of the enemy; for we shall be lost, for ever lost. The contemplation of our wretchedness and our perpetual weakness is no doubt very painful to our pride and self-love. What! After so many remedies, still to be ill? After so many splendid resolutions, still to be exposed to temptation? After so many conquests won, to be beaten once more? Who would not lose his peace and calm? Yes, it is all very painful, humiliating, and profoundly disheartening. And yet no experience can be more beneficial to us, for it ought to take us out of ourselves, and place us, full of humility and confidence, before the throne of God, without whose aid we can do nothing, and with whom we can do all

things : *omnia possum in eo qui me confortat* (Philip. iv, 13).

Agitation and discouragement do no good—they cure no ills. On the contrary, they blind our intelligence, lower our courage, harden and deaden our will. It is far better to control ourselves without impatience and anxiety, and to humble ourselves before God, confessing our wretchedness and distress, realising that without him we are capable of committing every kind of sin, and so to give ourselves up entirely to that merciful goodness which never despises the humble and contrite heart : *Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies* (Ps. l, 19).

Then, after a good confession, we rise absolved, determined to start on a better life and continue the interrupted work of our sanctification with greater vigilance and humility.

In this way, a sudden fault, even though it be a grave one, is far from being an insurmountable obstacle in the Christian life ; it may become a warning from which we can draw great profit, if it is quickly repaired, and expiated by sincere repentance : *diligentibus Deum omnia* (etiam peccata) *cooperantur in bonum* (Rom. viii, 28).

III. Scruples.—These are more difficult to deal with than actual sin, and in certain people are a very real stumbling-block in their Christian life.

As the etymology of the word shows, scruples are mere trifles, little pebbles, grains of sand, which are hidden in the pilgrim's shoe ; but worry him, and hinder his progress to such a degree that he sometimes stops altogether. A small cause to produce such disastrous results. Alas! as this cause is not physical, but spiritual, invisible, and intangible, it is most difficult to remove, and moral forces, which are the only ones the director can use, are sometimes very long in maturing. During this time, whilst waiting for the cure, the sufferings of a soul may be severe, and the spiritual father has to exercise great sympathy and kindness.

The causes of scruples are very varied, and it is useless to attempt any classification. Here are two of the most usual types :

1. We have known scrupulous souls who are afraid of sinning in everything they do, think or imagine, and who are worried by the fear that they are never in a state of grace. In the same way they show perpetual and unreason-

able doubt whether they can, or cannot, make a good communion on the days prescribed by the director.

For this strange evil, we suggest the following remedies:

(*a*) The first and most important is *obedience* to one's spiritual father, who should act in that capacity and exact unquestioning submission; as soon as this is done, the evil will be half cured. To obtain this result, it will be enough to explain to the penitent the well-known maxim of S Teresa and of all the saints: that though by submitting we may make mistakes, because the director is not infallible, yet the directed soul will not be a sinner. His sin would be purely material and committed in good faith and by mistake. *Obediendo errare possum, peccare non possum.* By repeating these acts of obedience, the will of the over-scrupulous person, which is too weak, will be strengthened little by little, until it ends by being able to guide and rule itself.

(*b*) The second rule of conduct to explain and insist on is this: When beset by doubts, the over-scrupulous man need never think that he has committed mortal sin, unless he is certain and can *swear to it*; in fact, in connection with doubts, it is best to judge *ex communiter contingentibus* as the theologians say, i.e. according to probability. For it is reasonable to think that a soul habitually pure and religious will continue to act in the same way, until the contrary is proved, and we must accordingly judge in its favour.

(*c*) The third anxiety of the director will be to widen his pupil's outlook, if his view of the divine perfection is narrow and inaccurate. "God is Love": *Deus caritas est*, according to S John's sublime definition (1 Jo. iv, 8), and his love towards us is that of a father infinitely tender and merciful. If he regards God as a tyrannical master, commanding us to do trifling and impossible things, he does not understand the divine nature and wrongs it.

He always commands us with a regard for our humanity, that is to say, accommodates his will to our weakness; more than that, he commands us as a good father, and expects from us the love and obedience of affectionate children, not the servile fear of slaves: *Jam non dicam vos servos, vos autem dixi amicos* (Jo. xv, 15).

We should then serve God with simplicity and filial love, without worrying and tormenting ourselves or unduly repeating prayers and confessions. All of which, to say

the least of it, is unseemly and unworthy of the affectionate regard a child should have for his beloved Father.

(*d*) Further, may we add a last remedy, which is often found to be efficacious? We sometimes have to deal with people who come within the province of the doctor no less than that of the spiritual director. Their faculties are weak, simply because their general health is upset; ordinary treatment and occasionally a simple medicine will stop the attack of nerves, by correcting the digestion, cleansing the blood, and thus adding a zest and a joy to life.

Other cases which are entirely abnormal, such as *abulia*, should be referred to specialists who deal in nervous diseases. We should be wandering from our subject in discussing them.[1]

[1] With regard to "nerves" and kindred troubles, see: Abbé Toulemonde, *Les nerveux*, 1913 (Bloud); Abbé Arnaud d'Agnel, *Direction de conscience*, Psychothérapie, 1921 (Téqui); Eymieu, S.J., *Le gouvernement de soi-même*, 3 vol.; R. de Synety, S.J., *La direction des Psychopathes* (*Revue d' Ascétique et de Mystique*, July, 1925).

CHAPTER II

The Illuminative Way

THE light which has guided us in the purgative way is as the early dawn, compared with the brightness of the path we are about to enter upon. It is Jesus Christ himself who will shine on us now, Jesus Christ who is the Light of the World: *Ego sum lux mundi* (Jo. ix, 5), because he is at one and the same time the Way, the Truth and the Life: *Ego sum via, veritas et vita* (Jo. xiv, 6). This light, it is true, shines through the darkness: *Et lux in tenebris lucet et tenebræ eam non comprehenderunt* (Jo. i, 5). But it depends upon us how far we welcome it, and whether we illuminate our hearts and minds in its beams.

This second stage in the Christian life has also its special form of *prayer*, its particular *virtues* to acquire, and *stumbling-blocks* to avoid.

ARTICLE I

Prayer Employed in This Way

The author of the *Imitation* begins his first chapter with these words: "*He who follows me does not walk in darkness*, said our Lord. These are the words of Christ telling us to imitate his life and example, if we wish to be enlightened and to be delivered from blindness of heart. Let our chief task then be to meditate on the life of our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Bk. I, c. i, 1.)

I. A New Mind.—The prayer of the first stage, or the purgative way, was of a somewhat negative description—reforming what was deformed, *deformata reformare*. But now, as a natural corollary, the new path will have a more positive goal: conforming to the likeness of Christ what has been reformed: *reformata conformare Christo*.

It is not enough to destroy what has been badly done, we must begin to build again on a new plan, and according to a new model, which is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

We see the perfect blending of the two stages in the *new form* which our prayer from henceforth should take. Meditation upon our final end—death, judgement, heaven and hell—is not sufficient ; it is no longer sufficient to dwell upon the wickedness of sin, and all that separates us from God—we must know what will bring us nearer to him, and follow the example that he has given us.

It is well to punish ourselves for our sins and shortcomings, but we must, besides, " put on " the virtues of our Lord Jesus.

Without doubt, our model is God himself, the eternal archetype of every creature, primeval source of all truth, goodness and beauty. Sacred Scripture often tells us that to be perfect, man must imitate God : *Estote imitatores Dei* (Eph. v, 1). At the creation, the Holy Trinity made man to his own image and likeness, and raised him to a state of grace, so that by this supernatural aid he might show in the conduct of his life that he is actuated by this hidden spirit.

For what more glorious calling for man is there than to imitate God ? What more pleasing to a mind, filled with the true ideal, of love of truth, goodness and beauty ? But again, what is more difficult than to model ourselves on the invisible, whose inner life is so removed from our human life, so hidden in mystery ? It was to bring this great example within our ken, and to stoop to the weakness of man, that the Word of God became incarnate. The word, the image of the Father : *imago Dei invisibilis* (Col. i, 15) was shown to us in our mortal flesh, in a human life more beautiful and more holy than any other among the children of men, and we have thus before our eyes a visible picture of the unseen glory. Henceforward we can walk in the likeness of God, because we have before us the example of a man, mortal like ourselves, and yet God; the example is God made man, a model of absolute perfection.

If, then, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, if he conversed as a friend with men, if he led our life with its everyday actions, and even shared human weaknesses compatible with his sanctity, yet without sin, it was to give us an example in everything and everywhere. He himself has taken care to tell us : *Exemplum enim dedi vobis ut quemadmordum ego feci vobis, ita et vos faciatis* (Jo. xiii, 5).

He practised his lesson before teaching it to us, so as to make himself our model: *Cœpit Jesus facere et docere* (Acts i, 1).

Such is the great lesson the apostles were anxious to teach us. Every Christian, S John says, ought to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and live as he lived: *Debet sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare* (1 Jo. ii, 6). It is our vocation, says S Peter, to follow Jesus Christ: *In hoc vocati estis . . . ut sequamini vestigia ejus* (1 Pet. ii, 21); and S. Paul declares that God will receive into his kingdom only those who are like his divine Son: *Quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui* (Rom. viii, 29). This is why the same apostle says to the faithful at Corinth: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ": *Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi* (1 Cor. xi, 1).

Nothing is more expressive than example—nothing so attractive and beautiful as the perfect life. If our Lord had been content to say "Be kindly, and humble of heart,"—he would not have been understood. These particular virtues would have been incomprehensible to the men of his day. But he said: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi, 29); and we understand, as we look at the manger and its humiliation, the Judgement Hall and Calvary, and their examples of heroism. Not only do we understand the divine lesson from such teaching, but we love it, and its idealism charms and attracts us, and leads us on to follow it. So much so, that the divine Master has only to say: "Imitate me. See how I am lowly and humble of heart." We shall never understand what it is to be lowly and humble, if we do not constantly study and ponder how Jesus practised gentleness and humility. We shall never really love these virtues if we do not feel how beautiful and attractive they are. We shall never practise them earnestly and gladly, unless the love of Jesus has come to our hearts to silence our murmurs, restrain our natural inclinations, and melt our hardness.

This is the knowledge which S Paul ranked above all earthly knowledge: *Existimo omnia detrimentum esse propter eminentem scientiam Jesu Christi Domini mei* (Philip. iii, 8); and this he prayed God to send abundantly to his faithful people, because it alone can ennoble our life here below, and give us the key to heaven and to life eternal:

Hæc est vita æterna, ut cognoscant . . . quem misisti Jesum Christum (Jo. xvii, 3).

II. As we meditate on the life of Jesus Christ, all the virtues spontaneously grow in our souls, if by degrees we change our dry discursive meditation into AFFECTIVE PRAYER. It is the natural progress of meditation in the second stage of the Christian life. To the logical criticisms of pure reason, with its syllogisms and dry conclusions, we add the emotions of a heart that loves and feels, and without speech we hold communion with the Father. It is true that in all discursive meditation, the heart should have its place, but now it ought to take the leading part in every prayer, since the reasons for our faith and convictions have long been established; the head can, and should, give way to the heart.

For instance, it is impossible to contemplate the love of our Lord for us, in all the details of his passion and death, in the institution of the Sacraments—especially the Holy Eucharist, which is his memorial—without kindling in our hearts, if they love him, the deepest devotion. It is impossible to contemplate this winning gentleness, this deep, wonderful humility, this patience which nothing alters or disturbs, this obedience to God the Father, which leads him even to a cruel humiliating death—all these heroic qualities, without being attracted by their beauty, and so bending every effort towards following so sublime a pattern.

And if in our daily practice, we meet many difficulties, they will be overcome by this single thought: "God took upon himself many sufferings and humiliations for me, shall I be discouraged by so little?" *Nondum usque ad sanguinem restitistis* (Heb. xii, 4). And love will triumph over all obstacles, if during our affective meditation deep devotion has been kindled within us, making our Saviour the centre of our hearts and thoughts. Then, as S Paul found, the feelings of Christ Jesus will be shared by us: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu* (Philip. ii, 5), and they will become the centre of our entire life: *Mihi vivere Christus est* (Philip. i, 21). And this change, so greatly longed for, will be due to the practice of affective prayer.

ARTICLE II

Imitation of Christ

Penance and mortification are the right virtues for the purgative way, but we are far from saying that they are now no longer suitable in the present stage. On the contrary, they ought to be continued all our life long, and we ought always to keep in mind the sins we have committed, both to expiate them more and more: *amplius lava me* (Ps. l, 4), and to preserve ourselves from them, after the example of the holy King David: *et peccatum meum contra me est semper* (Ps. l, 5).

It is true that certain modern thinkers say that the fear of God and of his punishments is a feeling that should not find a place in our hearts; yet we see S Teresa continually preaching the fear of God to her holy sisters, and to those most advanced along the religious path; even S Paul, caught up to the third heaven, and bent under the weight of apostolic labours, feared for his own salvation after having saved others: *Ne cum aliis pradicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar* (1 Cor. lx, 27).

Let us simply say that neither the fear of God, nor penance and expiation, nor mortification should be the *dominant* virtues of the whole of the Christian life; and that during the second stage, without abolishing and despising them, we should rise from one degree to another, according to our progress along the illuminative way. The old Law, which was a law of fear, has to give way in the new Dispensation to a law of love.

The love of God, then, is to be the chief factor in the illuminative way, a love as yet very imperfect, resembling more nearly hope than pure charity, but enough to put into action all the TRAIN OF VIRTUES, and to stir them into a new life, to raise our hearts on high—*sursum corda!*—and to turn them towards God: *habemus ad Dominum.*

As the soul rises towards God, what virtues ought we chiefly to cultivate? It is clear that in this work of perfection we cannot undertake everything at once, so we ought to know how best to choose, and so progress gradually and methodically.

The choice will depend upon the needs of each person,

and upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which differs with different souls. Generally, we have to continue the struggle against our dominant fault, and practise more carefully and strictly the contrary virtue. Then, when the struggle is somewhat lessened, so as to give us peace—for finished it never will be in this life—and when the contrary virtue seems to be sufficiently acquired, with the help of grace and the advice of our director, we shall be able to choose what virtues will be most useful to our state—that is to say, useful both to ourselves, to others, to the souls confided to our care if we have charge of souls, or to the people amongst whom we live.

Our spiritual adviser, after praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will consult our tastes and make the choice for us.

ARTICLE III

Obstacles

The seven capital sins—pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth—once conquered and laid low in their gross material forms during the earlier period, may yet reappear in a more delicate and refined guise as we tread the higher path, seeking thus to take their revenge. It is the great stumbling-block in this stage of the Christian life, and the director should be careful to warn his penitents, and to open their eyes to the danger which confronts them so that they may be on their guard.

We are going to describe what are so rightly called the seven capital sins of the devout. Without being usually so full of evil as the other deadly sins, they nevertheless contain the root or germ of them.

I. Spiritual Pride.—The first form of this sin is an undue pride in our natural gifts of mind and body, in our superiority, intellectual, moral or physical, in our wealth, or in the dignity of position which gives us authority over others, and makes us treat them as our inferiors. The second form of pride may change its direction, it may be displaced and attack our supernatural gifts—but fundamentally it is always the same, with this additional evil, that it is sacrilege to regard all supernatural gifts as

our own; it is still more a folly, because as the word itself tells us, the supernatural is something quite beyond our nature and our merits.

The words of S Paul: *Quid habes quod non accepisti?* (1 Cor. iv, 7) are still truer here, and the deception which arrogates them to ourselves is still less excusable; it is a manifest theft of the gifts which God has trusted and lent to us, but not given as our property. "Now, if thou hast received," adds S Paul, "why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" *Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis?* (1 Cor. iv, 7).

But it is not rare to meet souls of angelic purity, of splendid poverty (having given away their wealth in good works), and of boundless devotion to the glory of God, who yet appear to us to be filled with pride, if we watch their infinite self-satisfaction, their want of regard for others, especially their inferiors, and for all who do not practise the particular works they esteem.

To see and hear these people, one would think that the Pharisee of the Gospel was here before our eyes, with his arrogant prayer: "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are. . . ." Like him, they do not shrink from fastings and watchings, so as to appear holy in the eyes of men, and they treat with harshness those who have less zeal and courage.

Such religious egotists will despise those confessors and spiritual directors who do not take them at their own valuation, and will change or go from one to another until at last they find the confessor who through ignorance, or flattery, agrees with them; they regard him as an ideal adviser of souls. Henceforward they have recourse to every sort of device to maintain the character they have assumed, and at length both director and directed, the blind leading the blind, slip down unchecked towards the abyss—*ambo in foveam cadunt.*

When their methods appear too obvious, they have recourse to the luxury of two confessors: the one to whom they go occasionally to unburden their heart, the other to whom they reveal only their best side. This hateful duplicity, which is so dangerous to their own salvation, has for its origin spiritual pride. It is pride, which blinds us to our own defects, or which makes us correct them with impatience and self-love—so far removed from the love of

God—and which throws certain souls into misery and distress, a just punishment for their self-love.

To such unquiet souls, the director should often recall the great lessons of our Lord on gentleness and humility, those fundamental virtues which alone can bring us the peace of God : *Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris* (Matt. xi, 29).

II. Spiritual Covetousness.—Covetousness is the sin of those who are possessed by an undue desire to acquire, or to preserve, the riches of this world. In the same way, spiritual covetousness is the defect of those religious people who are possessed by an *excessive* desire to obtain new spiritual favours, or to preserve what God has already accorded them. If God does not, for the best of reasons, acquiesce at once in all their desires, if he takes away some of the consolations and graces which he has given, they are not only grieved and troubled, but even vexed and irritated, forgetting that every gift and grace is freely given, and that God is the Lord of all : *dividens singulis prout vult* (1 Cor. xii, 11).

This inward trouble results in numberless indiscreet visits to their ordinary director, and sometimes to others, to obtain the consolations for which they are so anxious. If they receive counsels of wisdom and moderation, they hardly ever practise them, as they are entirely given up to the quest of advice which will bring them to their goal and compass their end—I mean their longing to acquire new spiritual riches, instead of loving the poverty which is their lot, and the holy humility which helps them to bear it.

Others seek their wealth in a multiplication of devotions, both ordinary and extraordinary, in the acquisition of religious objects, images, crosses, medals, and reliquaries, with which they decorate their rooms, or which they carry about with them, and from which they are never parted. Assuredly, these collections, worthy of a religious museum, are not always blameworthy, but they present a danger, that of drawing us more to the outward forms of sanctity than to its essence ; of letting go the substance for the shadow, and of drawing us to a sort of superstitious cult, so that all these encumbrances, far from being a help to real piety, may on the contrary prove a distraction, and a serious obstacle to the spiritual life.

III. Spiritual Lust.—Even after overcoming the demon of the flesh, it may happen that certain religious people take too much delight in divine consolations, to such a point that the purest joys of the mind—by the deceit of Satan, or else by a certain weakness in a nervous temperament—may find an echo in the lowest and most vulnerable part of our nature, and there produce disturbances in spite of ourselves. Such cases are not rare, and we know that certain Quietists of the sixteenth century, such as Molinos and his followers,[1] drew down upon themselves the condemnation of the Church for encouraging those who practised these disorders. According to them, the vilest thoughts and most criminal actions may be indulged in with impunity, if they are done during the act of loving contemplation, and it is useless to resist these temptations, seeing that souls who have arrived at perfection are impeccable. Thus under the pretext of perfection, the way is opened for the gravest disorders. The body having only a distant connection with the soul, according to the Cartesian philosophy, it is only reasonable to thrust it aside and let it go adrift, if it hinders the soul in its ascent to God.

Although these doctrinal mistakes have been condemned, the tendencies remain even to our own day, and we know how difficult it is to surmount them. Here are some rules which may assist us: 1. The involuntary movements that occur during our religious exercises, even during Holy Communion, are a sure sign that the penitent is still young and new to the practice of holiness, and that the Spirit of God does not yet entirely engross his mind. When he is further advanced along the way of holiness this control will become absolute, and these distractions will no longer disturb his union with God. Whilst waiting for the accomplishment of this, he should exercise a deep confiding humility. The director should show great sympathy for these poor souls, who are usually ill in body, anæmic, or of abnormal character, more to be pitied than blamed, as their fault is entirely involuntary, and yet they suffer under the weight and shame of their misery.

2. The voluntary cases which are to be dreaded and reformed are those which arise indirectly from causes more or less remote, but recurring frequently. For instance, if the spiritual intercourse between two persons of the same

[1] See the condemned Propositions, Nos. 24, 37, 41 to 53, 57, etc.

sex, or of opposite sexes, has produced a too tender form of friendship, the thought of this will often disturb the mind. It is clear that before absolution, the director ought to insist upon breaking off of these dangerous friendships, even when the danger only exists for one of the two parties. Upon this point all the leaders of spiritual thought, S Basil, S John Chrysostom, S Teresa, Cassian, S Laurence Justinian, S Francis de Sales, and S Thomas himself, are united in laying down strict rules, which they demand should be carried out rigorously, and no attempt made to soften them. And do not let it be thought that this danger exists only in religious communities—it is found in lay society, and especially where young people meet together.

If it is a beloved friend or a dear master whose presence disturbs you, break off the friendship and give it up altogether: *Si oculus tuus scandalisat te, erue eum, et projice abs te!* (Matt. v, 29).

We cannot be too much on our guard against wandering from the path of spiritual friendship.

IV. Spiritual Anger.—Religious people who give way to bad temper and irritability, are inclined to consider all passionate outbursts on behalf of God's glory as something quite excusable and even virtuous. But they are wrong; there is rarely an excuse for anger and violent language; our Lord showed this clearly to his disciples when they asked him to call down fire from heaven upon the towns given up to sin. Nothing is served by rousing oneself into a passion against evil. To cure it, by far the best remedy is a gentle reprimand. And often even a reprimand should not be forthcoming, for in such circumstances it is generally useless, and it is best to keep a discreet silence; but if some reproof is really necessary, the director should be careful to give it with gentleness and wisdom, even if he himself has never fallen into the sin he is rebuking, and because a word spoken gently will bear more fruit than one uttered sharply and angrily.

As the lovable S Francis de Sales says, it is easier to catch flies with a drop of honey than with a basin of vinegar. And so it is with souls.

As to those religious people who worry and irritate themselves over the slow progress they make in virtue, or over the dull and barren places they come to on the way of per-

fection, we ought to ask whether they are fretting against God or against themselves. Against God? Surely they would not dare, for he is the absolute master of his gifts. Against themselves? But why are they surprised and astonished at their own wretchedness? They ought to consider themselves more in need of pity than of anger, and treat themselves with kindness and patience. A little humility will cure this disagreeable fault in those who are affected, and benefit those about them who have been shocked by a display of bad temper: *Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde* (Matt. xi, 29). Once and for all, checking our impatience is the great lesson we have to learn.

V. Spiritual Gluttony.—There are delights connected with spiritual feasts, just as there are those connected with the table, and the former, because of their more subtle character, are none the less dangerous. Temperance is just as necessary in the one as in the other, *oportet sapere ad sobrietatem* (Rom. xii, 3).

If a nice discrimination in spiritual things has been given us by God, just as he gives us a taste for bodily food, we should use it as an encouragement to seek after and attain spiritual blessings, and not as an end merely to be enjoyed for its own sake. It would be a reversal of order to live for the sake of eating, and it is an egoistical and erroneous notion to love the consolation of God more than the God of consolation.

It is this error that constitutes spiritual gluttony. We seek for spiritual help and consolations with too much eagerness, and for themselves alone, and not as a necessary help to our human weakness to draw us more easily to God and to persevere in his service. It is a secret vice which robs our best actions of their merit. In vain shall we be stirred to the deepest emotion ten times a day, if we only seek in this holy practice our own pleasure and spiritual enjoyment instead of the glory of God: it is in vain that we shall vaunt our sanctity, and far from advancing in perfection, we shall slip back with great speed.

Just as a gourmand is always seeking rare and delicious dishes, so spiritual gluttony, by a strange twist, makes certain religious people turn from the ordinary and usual exercises, even though they may be obligatory, to practise extraordinary devotions which no rule imposes on them,

but which happen to please their spiritual taste. Amongst these unwise and foolhardy practices, we may mention a preference which some people have for singular mortifications. They bear with fretfulness and impatience the trials and sufferings which God sends them, but they assume with eagerness fasts, disciplines, hair-shirts, vigils, cords, and other mortifications of their own choice, too often unknown to their director, who would oppose their unwise zeal, or at any rate moderate it, and keep it within bounds.

There are some people who seem enamoured of the sufferings which God wills for his martyrs alone, and which it is not for man to make for himself. Although such cases are rare, it is well to bring them to the notice of the director.

Anything which upsets the health of the body indirectly affects the health of the soul, which has need of the body, and which would suffer if it had at its command only a weak and tired worker. Without in any way despising bodily mortification, which is sometimes necessary like a spur to a thoroughbred, it is far better to cultivate a broken and contrite heart and a meek obedient will; in the words of Holy Scripture: *melior est enim obedientia quam victimæ* (1 Kings xv, 22).

VI. Spiritual Envy.—Envy in general is the feeling of annoyance and dislike which we have for the prosperity of others. We have now to deal with the question of their spiritual prosperity, but the matter is fundamentally the same.

When we see our brothers make as good progress as ourselves in the Christian life, or even do a good deal better, we feel in our hearts annoyance and jealousy. And when we see that they are more respected than we are, that they receive higher praise, and that they are given distinctions and privileges which are refused to us, then our hearts are filled with bitterness, murmuring and discontent.

It is clear that this is a grave fault produced by our want of humility and charity. If we sincerely love all good, we shall love it wherever it is to be found, and not only when it is in ourselves. If we are burning with zeal for the glory of God, we shall regard with thankfulness all those who are serving him in earnest and holy lives; otherwise, we do not love God and his glory with pure hearts,

but it is ourselves that we love and seek, egoists that we are, under the pretext of the love of God and all good.

Here is a fault to correct, if we wish to progress along the path of Christian perfection ; for it is a fault which disturbs in our hearts the order of our affections, and is incompatible with the true love of God.

Want of humility is at the root of this evil. For if we were truly humble we should think the lowest place among our brethren the one best suited to us, either because it is just and due, or else from a spirit of penance and expiation for our sins of pride.

Once more we come back to the great lesson of our Master upon gentleness and humility : *Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde* (Matt. xi, 29). Without this, we shall not make one step forward in the way of perfection.

VII. Spiritual Sloth.—This is the seventh capital sin in religious people, and perhaps it is the one that does the most damage, for it is this which hinders their generous impulses or stops them half-way. We may be energetic in physical or intellectual exercises, but slack in spiritual labours. We quickly weary in well doing, because the effort needed is so great. We get bored, and almost regret having undertaken the pilgrimage of the Christian life. It is our bad nature getting the upper hand, our slothful nature which advocates the law of *least effort.* We wish to be generous, but only if it costs us nothing, or almost nothing—and yet, on the other hand, we can do what costs us dear if we have the grace of God to strengthen us, and make us capable of anything : *Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat* (Philip. iv, 13).

These lazy people who hesitate and stop half-way are like the children of Israel who, after their deliverance from slavery in Egypt, were marching to the Promised Land, and murmured in the desert at the length of their journey and at the heavenly manna sent them for food, and yearned for the flesh-pots of Egypt. They would have been well punished if Moses had allowed them to retrace their steps and to return to the cruel and humiliating yoke of the Pharaohs.

No good director will take much notice of the trifling desires of these lazy people, but will sympathise with them, and curb them or stimulate them a little, as Moses would have

done. Since they were brave and generous at the outset, they are capable of recapturing their early energy.

The chief difficulty is to imbue them with the fundamental principle of the Christian life. It is not from the spiritual pleasure we feel that we are to measure the value of our spiritual exercises and daily actions—it is the glory of God which should be the supreme rule of our life, following the example of our Lord, whose daily meat it was to do the will of his Father : *meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me, Patris* (John iv, 34). *Quae placita sunt ei facio semper* (John viii, 29). Serve God, serve God only, in our work and our cares, as in our joys. Let this be our only rule, for it comprises the whole of perfection. The cure for spiritual sloth is contained in this wonderful and powerful remedy.

CHAPTER III

The Unitive Way of Perfect Christians

BY the time we reach the third and last way which leads to the height of Christian perfection, we shall have overcome successfully the obstacles of the two earlier ways, we shall have corrected our faults and acquired a certain measure of virtue from the paths we have trodden. Then only will the soul be sufficiently cleansed and enlightened, sufficiently virtuous and loving to unite itself still more nearly to God, in a closer and more intimate relationship.

In this last stage, we shall find once more a form of *prayer* which is suitable to it, special *virtues* to be acquired, and new *stumbling-blocks* to avoid with the greatest care.

ARTICLE I

The Prayer Employed in this Way

Just as discursive meditation, where reason holds sway, is the most suitable prayer for beginners, and affective prayer, in which the emotions of the heart outweigh reasoning, is the prayer of the more advanced, so contemplation, taken in its widest sense, is the prayer for the perfect soul ; reasoning completely ceases in order to give place to a simple loving survey of the cherished object, and a *holy abandonment* of our will to the divine Will, so that we are indifferent to everything which is not God. And the reason is easily seen.

At the outset of our conversion, to strengthen us against sin, we need the help of our reason to convince us. But when once our convictions are firmly established, the use of argument ceases little by little, and gives place to love of the divine example whose virtues we are to imitate, for it is love which draws us towards them, and supports us in the difficult task of putting them into practice. Finally, reason ceases altogether and gives free play to a pure

selfless love, which grows more and more, until it permeates the whole being of the religious soul, and contemplation becomes increasingly frequent.

These three spiritual movements have been compared by S Thomas, following Denys the Pseudo-Areopagite, to the three movements of the angels, who rise first from the creature to God, then come down from God to the creature in the light of his love, and return at length to move in endless repose round God, in a movement called *circulatory*, because it resembles the endlessness of eternity; the first is said to be the *straight* movement, because it goes straight to God, and the other *oblique*, because it draws itself away only to return again by reasoning.

Though these symbols, familiar in the language of mystics, may be more or less inexact, we agree, with all spiritual writers, that contemplation is the most fitting prayer for the perfect soul; but there are different degrees and forms, which may be divided into ordinary and extraordinary contemplation.

Ordinary Contemplation, also called the prayer of simplicity, of which Bossuet speaks with authority, consists as we have already explained in a simple loving survey, more or less prolonged, of one religious thought: God and his perfection, Jesus Christ and his mysteries, or any other divine subject. It is produced by the ordinary concepts of reason and faith, drawn from external objects, and though it may not reveal anything that is fundamentally new, yet it makes us understand better what we already know, and penetrate more deeply into its mystery. Also by unexpected comparisons, it throws a fresh light upon old ideas.

Extraordinary Contemplation, according to the teaching of Benedict XIV, adds to the preceding a *new* element: either a partially new or an entirely new object of knowledge, or else an entirely new method of knowing, which does not at all resemble the ordinary method of acquired knowledge, which is always obtained by concepts abstracted from material things. So the knowledge of God, and of divine mysteries, becomes *experimental*, and is analogous to our material knowledge. As S John of the Cross explains it, God himself by his divine touch reveals to our heart and

mind new thoughts and sentiments which it would have been impossible for us to have invented, still less to have imagined; this is especially true when his influence stirs that inner region which mystics call the *summit* or *apex* of the soul, where no material image enters, nor any abstract conception of such an image. The first and most essential of these new experiences is the *experimental sensation of the Divine*, or the feeling that God himself is present with us and is acting in our souls in a miraculous way.

In our *Mystical Phenomena* we explain this doctrine at great length—it is one that is common to the mystic theologians since S Teresa, and has been excellently codified by the erudite Pope Benedict XIV. It is clear that we are here entering upon a new world, which transcends the preceding one in its immensity, and which must be treated by itself. It is enough here to indicate the point of division between the two unitive ways, and the two modes of contemplation, which by such different means attain the same end—union with God and sanctity, for there are not two kinds of sanctity, although there are two ways of reaching it. As S Teresa says, there is a " quicker method " which is brought about by the special intervention of God within the souls of certain of the elect, but he in no way abolishes the ordinary path for the generality of holy people. It is this special intervention of God which is the object of mystical theology, and which we must study separately as it deserves, since it forms an entirely fresh world of thought.

1. Let us return once more to ordinary contemplation or the prayer of simplicity, and note that though usually *pleasant*, it is sometimes both *dry* and *painful*, especially in those whom God intends for extraordinary contemplation, and to whom he sends trials or nights of passive purification to prepare them for it.

2. Let us notice also that the *subject* of ordinary contemplation *has to be prepared*—the evening before if possible—just as that of meditation in the other two stages. As this first form of contemplation is still an *active exercise* of the soul, the free choice of our will ought still to guide it, in preparing ourselves for the unforeseen workings of divine grace. Extraordinary contemplation, on the other hand, is a *passive state*, in which God himself inspires us, and provides superabundant subject-matter for our prayer. But as we can never foretell in advance the moment of such

divine inspiration, still less count upon it, it is practically necessary for all to prepare their subject. If we help ourselves, heaven will help us!

3. Finally, let us suggest that the most appropriate *subjects* for meditation in the unitive way—not forgetting the joys of the Nativity and the sorrowful mysteries of the Passion—are, above all, the glorious mysteries of our Lord, the Holy Eucharist which is his own memorial, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose love is the sublime compendium of every mystery.

ARTICLE II

Perfect Charity

As the name "unitive way" indicates, the chief virtue to acquire in this third stage is the UNION OF PERFECT LOVE, or the blending of our life with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know *the nature of this union*. It is not the simple union of God's presence, because that is about us everywhere, and in all created things, even inanimate objects; neither is it merely the union afforded by the grace of sanctification, which little children possess after baptism; nor the union of the *divine touch*, which is the privilege of the mystic in contemplation; but it is a union of thought and will with God in a *holy abandonment* to his will through perfect love.

We have already shown that this union was the object of the supreme prayer of Jesus to God the Father, at the solemn moment of his great sacrifice upon the Cross: *Pater sancte . . . ut sint unum sicut et nos . . . Sicut tu, Pater, in me et ego in te . . . ut sint unum sicut et nos unum sumus. . . . Ego in eis, et tu in me, ut sint consummati in unum* (Jo. xvii, 11-23). *Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu. . . .* (Matt. xvi, 39).

Such is the ideal of Christian perfection formulated by our Lord in the *Pater Noster*, of which all the apostles and saints have been but the faithful echo. And this ideal, as we see, is not accompanied by a *suspension of the powers* of the soul, as in a passive or mystical union: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," as S Paul says: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu* (Philip. ii, 5), and again: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me": *vivo autem jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (Gal. ii, 20).

This also is the doctrine of the pious founder of S Sulpice, M. Olier, who made it the foundation-stone of the spiritual life of all his seminaries. He writes, after the fashion of a spiritual architect, this sublime programme: *vivere summe Deo in Christo Jesu Domino nostro*: "Live wholly and alone for God in Jesus Christ our Lord," and he adds, "Live so that the hidden life of God the Son permeates the deepest springs of our life": *ita ut interiora Filii ejus intima cordis nostri penetrent.*[1]

Such is the chief virtue of the unitive way. It is simply pure love which lives only for the glory of God, and which takes as its model and way the life of our divine Master. So shall we make ourselves live this life, as he himself lived the life of God the Father, and unite our lives in one, as far as the difference in nature and substance will allow a human being to do.

S Teresa often complains bitterly of certain false mystics, blinded by their own errors, who claimed that the mediation of our Lord and his sacred humanity had no place in this "union." They allowed that the contemplation of it was good for beginners, but that the perfect go straight to the divine union without the mediation of God incarnate. The reason they gave was the unanimous teaching of the mystics that contemplation, in its strict and perfect sense, operates without any material image in the *summit* or *apex* of the soul. Their error consisted in not understanding that this mode of knowledge, though entirely spiritual, in no way excludes the thought of our Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, owing to the lack of material images, neither God nor the angels could understand and contemplate the divine humanity! Clearly, in their case, a pure idea takes the place of sensible images and conveys an even clearer meaning.

However, this difficulty does not bear upon ordinary contemplation, which operates by the normal processes of abstractive thought, and which we are dealing with here—we are merely calling it to mind.

Besides, the sacred humanity of our Lord cannot be separated from his divinity, since the hypostatic union. It has become by this personal union truly to be worshipped, just as the hand of a king or any other member, *inseparable* from his person, is equally to be revered, and it

[1] Olier, *Pietas Seminarii S Sulpitii.*

deserves in consequence the worship of *latria*. The scorn of the modern mystics for the divine manhood is thus reflected upon God himself; and their pretensions are indefensible and would have disastrous results on worship and piety. Our human nature is so constituted that without a visible image of the invisible God, all our religion would be whittled away, and vanish in a cloud of mist.

Let us hold firmly the *truth* which S Paul gives us: "Be ye followers of me, as I am also of Christ": *Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi* (1 Cor. iv, 16). And to emphasize it still further he adds: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus": *Hoc sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Jesu* (Philip. ii, 5). Such is the union, or the unity of life with him, and through him with God, which is our ideal, as it was also of the apostle: *Vivo jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus* (Galat. ii, 20).

ARTICLE III

Obstacles

The three most dangerous stumbling-blocks in the unitive way may be grouped as follows: 1st, a *want of* deep *humility*; 2nd, a rash *spiritual imprudence*, and 3rd, the *lures of the devil*. Let us give a glance to each of these obstacles.

1. The more a soul advances in holiness, so much the more ought its HUMILITY to increase. It is, in truth, the foundation of the spiritual structure, and the higher this is built, the deeper its foundations should go. The masters of the spiritual life are unanimous upon this point.

As we grow in sanctity, what likelihood there is that we shall set too high a value on ourselves, prefer our own wishes to those of others, and by our pride, place hindrances in the path of grace! This danger is so great that S Teresa was constantly preaching humility and the fear of God to her sisters, and the great apostle himself, after his rapture to the third heaven, and with all the heroism of his apostolic work, trembled at the thought that having saved others he might himself be a castaway (1 Cor. ix, 27).

To guard against this grave danger, we should return from time to time to the prayer for humility which we used in the first and second stages, and we should go through the well-known meditations: *nihil sumus*, we are nothing by

ourselves; *nihil habemus*, we have nothing which we have not received; *nihil possumus*, we can do nothing without God. In ourselves we have only sin, and the capacity for sin; God hates pride, and the passion for popularity: he resists the proud, and gives place to the lowly of heart.

These truths will seem less bitter, and will even become alluring, if we meditate upon the example of Jesus Christ, who, by his free choice, preferred a life of humility and poverty in his mother's womb, in the cradle, in the workshop of Nazareth, even in his Transfiguration, his Passion and death; and this veiled life is continued for us in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

Such is the usual subject of prayer for the perfect; such is the atmosphere which can keep them from the taint of pride, and amid such surroundings alone can the delicate plant of sanctity thrive and flourish.

II. A somewhat rash and bold SPIRITUAL AMBITION is often the outcome of the preceding fault. The more we progress in sanctity, the more we are tempted at certain moments to say: "To what heights may I not rise?" *Quo non ascendam?* forgetting that each one of us—in the inscrutable decrees of predestination—has been given a certain measure of ability by God, which we may not surpass, nor even wish to, for the Holy Spirit breathes where he will, and distributes his gifts as it pleases him—*dividens singulis prout vult* (1 Cor. xii, 11).

There is then a degree which is accessible to all, and a still higher degree which is reached only by a small number of the elect. It remains to define how far we may hope to aspire to it.

1. The point which is not only accessible, but imposed upon all as a strict necessity for their salvation, is to develop the germ of life received at holy baptism, that is to say, the grace of sanctification with its infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to the point which is needful for the salvation of our souls. No discussion is possible upon this first point.

2. The development of this grace, with the virtues and gifts, is possible to all souls great enough to aim at perfection. Here there are no limits at all, except those which God himself has placed in the *ordinary* ways of grace; neither are there any limits to *ordinary* or "acquired"

contemplation, so called because we may acquire it for ourselves even in the highest degree, simply by our own effort aided by the grace of God. Such contemplation, with its corresponding virtues, is accessible to all, to any degree.

3. But there is a contemplation which is not accessible to all, because it is above the effort of our own will, even when helped by the ordinary graces. It is that which, as we have said, S Teresa calls *supernatural*, for this very reason: *no se puede adquirir*, and which Benedict XIV, after S Teresa and S John of the Cross, has called *infused*—though all graces may be said to be infused—because of the new characteristic which marks it; it is the divine touch, or the impressed species, stirring in the soul new thoughts and new feelings, sometimes without the co-operation of images and ideas abstracted from images, as the natural method of man's knowledge demands.

It is this *method* of knowing and loving which is inaccessible to our human efforts alone, even when assisted by the ordinary co-operation of God.

But it is clear that such a grace so defined—and we have taken the definitions themselves from Benedict XIV, who summarises the teaching common to theologians—can be neither required from us, nor yet merited by us, either in the strict sense *ex condigno*, or in the broad sense *ex congruo*.

Doubtless such a grace would be still a grace of personal sanctification *gratum faciens*, and not a grace for the benefit of one's neighbour *gratis data* like that of prophecy, which in itself does not sanctify the prophet. However, as the *method* of this grace (the divine touch) is not necessary to sanctification, the grace itself is doubly free, and deserves in this different sense the name *gratis data*.

With these definitions before us, the question arises whether an ardent soul may not aspire without undue ambition to such a grace. Since it is a grace of sanctification which will unite us more closely with God, whom we can never love too dearly, it is clear, from this point of view, the ambition is excellent.

Only, the *extraordinary* method of this grace may be, for our weak natures, a *less sure* path than the ordinary one which leads to the same union as its goal, but by a longer and more difficult way. And any soul that has a degree of humility will beware of the extraordinary.

This is also the opinion of S Alphonsus, whose authority in ascetic and mystical theology is of the greatest weight. " Supernatural communications," he says, " which conform to the life of faith, such as the infusion of a general and indistinct knowledge, and the divine touch which unites the soul to God, should not be set aside, and may even be humbly longed for and expected, so that we may be more and more united to God, and confirmed in his holy love. This, however, is reserved *only for those who already enjoy such a grace*, whilst for others *the safest way* is to ask and yearn for an active union (and not passive), for this, as we have said, is the union of our will with the divine will."[1]

We know that this advice is found too severe for the new school of mystics, and so we hasten to put against it the opinion of Father Lallemant, whom they venerate as their spiritual Father, and the founder of the new school. He says, " Not only is there a danger in longing for transports and ecstacies, and for revelations and visions during these ecstacies, but even more in wishing for other ways than those in which God has been pleased to lead us ; but there is no danger in asking for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and his guidance, real virtue and fervent prayer." (*La Doctrine Spirituelle, p.* 470.)[2]

These are golden words. However desirable mystical contemplation may be *in itself*, it is always unwise—unless by an inspiration which would be the equivalent of a call —to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us into extraordinary ways other than those by which he has brought us. It is not for us to choose what would be preferable either for our own souls or for the glory of God.

Those directors who indiscriminately guide all pious

[1] Utrum omnes species gratiarum et communicationum supernaturalium debeant rejici aut acceptari ? Et distinguendum est, . . . cum S Joanne a Cruce et aliis : gratiæ quæ elongant a fide, ut sunt visiones, locutiones et revelationes, has oportet omni conatu rejicere ; sed illæ, ex opposito, quæ sunt uniformes fidei, ut sunt notitæ confusæ et generales, et tactus divini qui uniunt animam Deo, non sunt rejiciendæ, immo possunt humiliter expeti et desiderari, ut magis magisque Deo uniatur, et in suo sancto amore solidetur. Hoc nihilominus intelligitur pro illis animabus quæ jam donantur similibus favoribus, quoniam pro aliis, *tutior via est desiderare et expetere tantum modo unionem activam*, quæ, ut diximus, est unio voluntatis nostræ cum divina voluntate (*Homo apost.*, App. I, iii, 23).

[2] *First* Edition, containing a manuscript testimony of the first publisher. (Bibliothèque de l'Institut catholique de Paris.) This edition is free from certain subsequent amendments.

souls towards passive ways of contemplation are extremely unwise, for, as Father Lallemant says again: "We should not, of ourselves, practise these forms of prayer,"—they will assuredly end by becoming visionaries or false mystics. (*Ibid.* p. 455.)

The argument which these directors draw from the present practice of frequent, and even daily communion, has no weight. Each one of us can prepare ourselves to make a good communion, for the reception of the sacraments is not above our reach; but it is entirely beyond our compass to enter into passive contemplation, to receive the divine touch and infused impressed species.

Here once again is confusion of thought between active or acquired contemplation, which is accessible to all really pious people, and passive contemplation, inspired by divine influence, which is the gift of God, and infinitely above our human efforts.

4. Still stronger is the reason against daring to desire—unless directly inspired by the Holy Spirit—or to ask for *charismata* or extraordinary gifts, which have not as their end the sanctification of our souls, but only the welfare of our fellow-men. Such are gifts of prophecy, miracles, healing, the gift of tongues, and the like, as S Paul enumerates (1 Cor. xii, 8-10). However, in the primitive Church, where such gifts were frequent, it was allowed to desire them, in view of the large number of unbelievers to be converted; the need of souls and the wide labours of the apostles were sufficient reason for desiring God to grant them. Moreover, S Paul exhorts his followers to ask for these gifts, and to seek for even better and higher graces with holy fervour: *æmulamini charismata meliora* (*Ibid.* v, 31).

III. The Wiles of the Devil.—The higher a soul rises towards perfection, so much the more does the devil, in his wickedness, strive to hinder their course, and to pervert it by a thousand false lures. This is a fact unanimously recognised.

We will leave to the mystical theologian the study of demoniacal *possession* among the more perfect. Although such cases are very rare, they are by no means unknown. The instance of Father Surin, of sainted memory, after his famous exorcisms at Loudun, is one of the best known.[1]

We will also leave to mysticism the task of examining

[1] See Abbé Brémond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, vol. V.

the question of demoniacal *obsession* among the saints. The history of this is frequent and, from S Antony and the Fathers of the Desert down to the saintly Curé d'Ars, we find most curious and yet perfectly authentic examples of the desperate struggles of the devil with the greatest saints in every age.

Ascetic theology ought to limit its study to the most ordinary cases, where this struggle takes on no preternatural character, but is none the less treacherous for all that; it may take place in the most perfect souls who exercise active or acquired contemplation, and who have not yet entered upon the path of passive, mystical contemplation.

The temptations which the devil suggests are extraordinarily varied, and defy strict classification. We have already dealt with six groups in treating of the *Empire of the Devil* and the *Discernment of Spirits*; finally, we are going to add two more examples which are specially characteristic of the unitive way, though without making any claim to exhaust the subject.

1. The first of these secret temptations, which the devil fosters with care, is the desire to *do without a spiritual director*, or to change perpetually from one to another—which comes to the same thing as having none at all. This is a grave danger.

" The wisest are lost," says S Bernard, " when they trust to their own light instead of being guided by others. To trust to oneself, is to trust to a fool." (S Bern., *Ep.* lxxxii.) And S Dorotheus adds " The devil has no surer way of damning souls than of persuading them to do without counsel and to direct themselves." (S Dorotheus, *Doct.*, 5.)

The reason is easy to understand. Once freed from the clear disinterested advice of a wise and experienced director, the defenceless soul falls more easily into the clutches of the devil. Henceforward, it may be inspired and directed by the devil without any defence from outside; for he easily becomes the master, if the Holy Spirit permits such a trial as a just punishment for presumption.

And we may notice that this neglect of a director, which arises from a spirit of positive emancipation and self-sufficiency, or else from inconstancy, over-scrupulousness, vanity or some other fault, produces the same result, and may lead to the lowest depths. The vessel is without a pilot, and is almost certain to end in shipwreck.

2. After the temptation to presumption, the contrary vice may appear—that of discouragement and even *despair*. When the devil has caused the fall of a presumptuous soul into some grave error, or at least into the fault of lukewarmness and disgust for holy things, how can such a one be raised again when he has fallen from his first fervour?

The devil suggests at once that this is impossible and the soul is brought to despair. This is the worst temptation and must be overcome at all costs. For this purpose, the help of the director is more than ever necessary. It is to him that the soul returns as the prodigal son to the arms of his Father.

Never to despair of the mercy of God, which is infinite, is not only a counsel, but a rule. All may be turned to our good, even our sins, says S Augustine: *Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum* (Rom. viii, 23).

Such then are the chief stumbling-blocks to be avoided in the way of perfect love: a want of deep humility, a rash and excessive spiritual ambition, and lastly, the wiles of the devil, which toss us between two opposite extremes, on one side presumption, and on the other discouragement and even despair.

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

The reader who has followed us thus far may now cast a backward glance to measure the road we have taken, and survey together the landscape around us. He will himself draw up the *synthesis* of what he has seen, will pick out the ruling idea, and by a simple comparison of the asceticism which we have described with non-religious asceticism practised of old and even to-day, he will easily understand its immense superiority and divine power.

All asceticism which has appeared in history throughout the ages has one feature in common. According to the etymology of the Greek word ἀσκεῖν, they are the *exercises* which, by a continuous and methodical effort, prepare one for the struggle, since the idea of exercise is joined to the idea of endurance, of athletic strength developed and maintained for combat. But as there are different sorts of struggles, so there are different preparatory exercises which by no means produce the same benefit.

First of all there are the *purely physical* exercises which aim only at the improvement of the body, giving suppleness and strength to the limbs. These are, for instance, military training, gymnastics, and the passion for walking and various sports which have so much occupied all young people since the War. Considered in themselves, these activities of drilling and boxing are often grotesque and laughable, for they do not even offer a display of gracefulness in which we might find some charm. But it is the end they aim at which justifies and raises them in our eyes. For we see that their praiseworthy motive is strength and suppleness of the limbs, health and hygiene ; or a goal still nobler and more patriotic, that of military service and the defence of one's country.

Above these purely physical exercises, we hasten to put the *moral asceticism* of the ancients, above all the Pythagoreans and the Stoics, whose highest aim was the subjection of the will, and self-discipline, in order to control and subdue the animal passions. They learnt, by spiritual exercises, to mortify themselves, and to give up their own will, so as to achieve the triumph of soul over body, and

mind over matter. We have already quoted their celebrated maxim: *abstine et sustine*, ἀνέχου καί ἀπέχου, "Abstain from pleasures, even the most permissible, and bear with courage those evils which cannot be avoided." This was the ideal wisdom of the philosophers, like the dawn which foreshadowed the wisdom of Christ.[1]

Their ambition was noble, especially when we compare it with the madness of the Cynics of that time, or of the followers of Nietzsche to-day, whose pride it is to produce a "superman" and to teach him to violate every law both human and divine, and scorn the rest of mankind as slaves.

Moreover, this ambition was much hampered by the boundaries of earth, and the limitations of this life, so that the noblest aspirations of the human heart towards the infinite ran the risk of being stifled in their flight. Above all it was fundamentally corrupted by pride and egoism. The philosophic ideal, in fact, was an *aristocratic ideal*, indulged in by a small number of thinkers, who were pleased to consider they were not like the rest of mankind, whom they scorned, and in fact despised. Their ideal, besides, was rarely attained even by themselves, or if attained, in how imperfect and unstable a manner! As to the love of their fellow-men—in spite of a few fine phrases found here and there in the works of the best philosophers—we may say that this attitude of mind was not hinted at in any non-Christian asceticism of olden times. The idea of starting works of philanthropy rarely entered the minds of the best moralists. Seneca himself suggested to the unhappy ones of this earth the final remedy of *suicide*.

Christian asceticism broke down the barriers between different classes of society and schools of thought. No longer was it directed to the intelligence of the elect and leisured alone. It is to all men of goodwill that our Lord brings from heaven to earth the graces of spiritual life and inward peace; no exception is made for the poor and the lowly of this world, who were, on the contrary, called before the wise men of the East. Here is the great miracle worked by our Saviour as a sign of his divine mission: *Pauperes evangelizantur* (Matt. xi, 5).

Henceforward each one, without exception, and according to his condition and state, is called not only to avoid evil

[1] See De Broglie, *Problèmes et conclusions de l'Histoire des Religions*, 2nd Ed., Paris, 1886, p. 249 *et seq.*

and do good, but to lead a life of holiness and perfect virtue. All are called to live, not only a life terrestrial, but a life divine, far from this earth, whilst we wait for the bliss of heaven where we shall see God face to face. Now we know him by abstractive thought and argument, which starting from created things, mount up by logical sequence to their Creator and First Cause. Then, lost in contemplation of the infinite beauty of God, we shall love him with all our heart and all our strength, and share unceasingly eternal Blessedness. Yes, it is God himself who wills to be our life and our reward: *Ego merces tua magna nimis* (Gen. xv, 1), but always on the condition that we have prepared ourselves for him here below, by a life worthy of the children of God.

Such is the sublime end of Christian asceticism, infinitely higher than all other kinds, which are inspired by reason alone. Not that Christian asceticism rejects reason; on the contrary, it raises and purifies it, it points out a goal to be attained which is higher and more beautiful, and assists us by supernatural means to attain it. As regards ourselves, reason does not give up her place, even though enlightened by faith—she continues to hold sway, but in submission to the will of God, whose service is a kingdom—*cui servire regnare est.* Reason and faith are two beams which emanate from the same sun of truth, and far from opposing, they strengthen each other. Divine love never stifles our natural affections, it raises and purifies them; it widens the capacity of our human hearts, till they are able to embrace the whole world.

The apostles and the saints of the Church, which is so well called Catholic, have understood the great sentiment, "love of humanity," and have felt inspired by it. For their fellow-men they have shed their blood, and given up their lives.

Such is the supernatural and transcendent end of Christian asceticism—the possession of God himself, by divine love, as the prize of our victory in this life. We have explained this at great length in the *first part* of our study. In the *second part*, we have made ample acquaintance with the enemies which we have to overcome in this world; enemies within ourselves—the three lusts of the flesh, of pride, and of riches; enemies outside of us, in the wickedness of the world, and the temptations of the evil one. The struggle

is great and our whole life is one continual battle: *militia est vita hominis super terram* (Job vii, 1). Instead of worshipping our passions like the pagans, so as to dispense with fighting against them, we know that we have to struggle against them continually, in a struggle both offensive and defensive, without sparing even those subtle sins which the moralists of old hardly dared to condemn, such as unchastity, pride, and selfish contempt for others.

And it is not only our reason or moral dignity which teaches us to subdue them entirely; it is also, as we have seen, the explicit teaching of our Lord, who has made it the first condition of discipleship: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*" (Matt. xvi, 24), and it is also the example which all the apostles have left us: "I chastise my body," says S Paul, "and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 Cor. ix, 27). What distinguishes the Christian ascetic, then, is not the stolid indifference of the Stoics, but the mark of the Cross, which is imprinted upon our every thought, and the tenderest fibres of our being. He will suffer willingly for God, through love of God and of mankind: *love and suffering* are the two sides of the medal of Christian asceticism.

In the *third part* we described at some length the new armour of the soldiers of Christ, which will strengthen and protect them in their new battle. The *grace* of God, after having sanctified their souls and made them children of God, strengthens their faculties with *infused virtues*, theological and moral. S Paul, in military metaphor, says: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, in all things taking the shield of faith . . . the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. vi, 14-17; 1 Thess. v, 2). Moreover, in conducting the battle it is the *Spirit of God* himself who will lead, for "whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God": *Quicumque Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei* (Rom. viii, 14).

Moreover, this Spirit from on high is divine love, which makes us love all things in God, and for God; which makes us love Jesus Christ the visible image of God the invisible, and *the Cross*, the epitome and summary of his

love. It is the only knowledge of which S Paul dares to boast: "I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified": *Non judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum, et hunc crucifixum* (1 Cor. ii, 2). "Jesus has suffered through his love for me," he seems to say, "I will also suffer through my love for him; Jesus loved poverty; I too will love it that I may the more resemble him" . . . This is the new strength divinely infused into the heart of man, and this alone can explain the triumphs of the saints, who have conquered and transfigured this world.

Inspired by such supernatural power both inwardly and outwardly, we can well understand how all good Christians may follow S Paul who boldly affirms that he can do all things by the grace of God: *omnia possum in eo qui me confortat* (Philip. iv, 13); he dares to defy every element in heaven and earth to separate him from the love of Christ: *Quis me separabit a charitate Christi*? . . . (Rom. viii, 35).

So, after having described the enemy, and passed under review all the supernatural armour now put at our disposal to resist him, it only remained in the fourth and fifth parts to explain the theory of all our spiritual exercises, which prepare us for the struggle, as well as their practical application to the three stages of beginner, proficient and perfect, as they pass along the path of Christian perfection.

All this vast mechanism seems a little complicated, and so it is, if we examine every wheel in its smallest detail. In the same way, the playing of all musical instruments seems extraordinarily difficult when first explained methodically to a beginner, but after a little practice and study, it becomes surprisingly easy, and charms him more and more.

The experience of ages has shown that it is exactly the same in the harmony of spiritual exercises, where prayer and self-examination are the mainspring which stirs and develops all the other faculties. Not only does such discipline rapidly become easy and smooth, but it readily *adapts* itself to all our needs under the most varying conditions of lay or religious life. It most surely achieves the conquest of self, the control of the will and senses, and the complete purification of the soul. All the saints, without exception, have been great ascetics.

At the same time, the experience of the centuries has

pointed out the philanthropy and *social development* which springs from Christian asceticism.

Christian ascetics have always devoted themselves to temporal and spiritual works of mercy, and the greater part of these have been organised by them or under their inspiration. They have given alms, tended the sick, given hospitality, helped and released prisoners, evangelised the poor. They have done even better, for in raising the dignity of manual labour by their teaching and example, they followed in the footsteps of their divine Master; they prepared the way for the abolition of slavery, that social plague-spot, that shame of fallen humanity—and so introduced a new civilisation.

More than that, by the force of their moral character, and by the fervour of their apostolic zeal, they put down many social evils, and gave the most salutary lessons to rich and poor alike, both to princes of the Court, and kings on their thrones. This can be easily proved from history.

The wonderful power that sustained the early Christians is far from being exhausted. *In our own day* we still see the houses of the Carthusians and Trappist monks filled with men eager for penance and expiation, renewing the exercises practised of old by hermits in the deserts of the Thebaïd or Palestine. We see the Carmels thronged with innocent souls who are expiating the crimes of their brothers in virtue of the great doctrine of the Communion of Saints. The austere beauty of their heroic devotion can move the hearts of even the most hardened to tears. And in the midst of the world, in palace and cottage alike, there are secret penitents, wearing hair-cloth or clothed in the coarsest raiment, who devote themselves to the humblest works of charity.

So to-day, as in olden times, it is the Christian ascetic who is the salt of the earth, and who hinders its total corruption. Their doctrine is not only for the individual, but for social life as well.

Finally, if we could sum up all the details of Christian asceticism in one single sentence, we should say that its essential characteristic is a well-balanced harmony of *personal effort, aided by the grace of God*, which can achieve the complete triumph of mind over matter, of the "new man" over the "old Adam."

Without the grace of God we can do nothing; neither can we do anything without our own personal effort, for God does not will to save us without ourselves, nor make us perfect without our own help: *Help yourself and God will help you.* Even the so-called *passive* virtues, such as humility and obedience, demand a large and sustained effort to quell and suppress the lower tendencies of our nature. There is in fact no virtue that is really passive.

In the same way the Church, watchful guardian of the Truth, has always condemned, as it reappears, every form of that slothful passive quietism which dreads action at all costs, and wishes to replace effort—which is trying, wearisome and sometimes painful—by some "short cut" or "simple means," such as the entire and passive abandonment of self into the hands of God. True enough, resignation to God is a very excellent virtue, but it cannot replace the other virtues, theological and moral, and even needs itself to be moderated, so as not to degenerate into annihilation of self which makes us indifferent to everything, even to our own salvation or damnation. The necessity for hope, in short, whilst we are on earth, is no less a duty than that of faith or charity; and the glory of God, no less than his goodness, demands of us a concern for our perfection and our eternal happiness, for it is his will to make his people happy and holy, and he asks for our help and co-operation.

Let us conclude that the ways of Christian perfection are essentially active—or at least *the ordinary ways.* Are there as well, beside and above these, *extraordinary* ways, to which God in his mercy calls certain souls, that they may attain the same end by a "shorter" road? Are there ways of entire passivity where new elements mingle and blend, where "it is God who does all," as S Teresa says, "only asking for our acquiescence." If such ways exist, it is clear that the rules for conduct and guidance would be quite different. We should there be touching upon a new science —an offshoot no doubt of asceticism, just as the latter is an offshoot of moral and dogmatic theology—but which has its own principles and its own conclusions, so as to adapt itself to new facts.

This is the great problem which we have hinted at several times in this work, and which we study in our book on mystical theology.

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PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY THE GARDEN CITY PRESS LTD., LETCHWORTH.

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FARGES ,ALBERT
AUTHOR
Ordinary Ways of the Spiritual Life
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